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Assembling the Man'yō Woman: Paratext and Persona in the Poetry of Ōtomo no Sakanoue

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Assembling the *Man'yō* Woman:
Paratext and Persona in the Poetry
of Ōtomo no Sakanoue

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Danica Marie Truscott

2022

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Paratext and Persona in the Poetry

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by

Danica Marie Truscott

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Torquil Duthie, Chair

Despite her significant corpus of poetry in Japan's oldest vernacular poetic collection, the *Man'yōshū*, Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue has been for the most part neglected in scholarship on premodern Japanese literature and the history of women's writing. When her work is mentioned, it is either framed as simply containing early examples of a style of love poetry that came to define much of women's compositions in later periods, or deemed valuable for its biographical information about the author with little consideration of its relation to broader narratives about the old aristocratic family to which she belonged. The goal of this project is to challenge two notions that permeate scholarship on women's writing in early Japan up to this point: 1) that the poetic category in which most women, including Sakanoue, composed poetry was devoid of any political significance and 2) that women such as Sakanoue exist separately from larger cultural

narratives surrounding the sociohistorical conditions of the imperial court during her lifetime. Following recent trends in *Man'yō* scholarship that advocate for reading the anthology as a text, this study applies concepts such as Michel Foucault's "author function," and Gérard Genette's *paratext* to anthological elements such as headnotes, endnotes, and sequencing, in order to demonstrate how the figure of Sakanoue operates in the anthology as a symbol of the Ōtomo lineage's poetic prowess as well as their devotion to the imperial throne. As her nephew was likely the final compiler for the volumes in which Sakanoue appears, I contend he chose to highlight her poetry not simply because of their close relationship, but also in order to recuperate their family's image in the wake of political misfortune.

The dissertation of Danica Marie Truscott is approved.

Michael D. Emmerich

Seiji Mizuta Lippit

Christina Laffin

Torquil Duthie, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2022

To my parents, Marq and Kelly, who always encouraged me to pursue my dreams

And in memory of Edwin Cranston, whose love of poetry, translation, and Sakanoue was infectious and remains with me to this day

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List of Abbreviations

JSPS — Japan Society for the Promotion of Science 日本学術振興会

MYS — *Man'yōshū* 萬葉集 Hanawa shobō edition

SNKBT — *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系

SNKBZ — *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集

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It has been a long journey up to this point, and it will continue for a while still. I was once told that the process of writing a dissertation was the loneliest phase of a doctoral program. There were moments of solitude for sure, especially during quarantine in the wake of a global pandemic, but I am fortunate to have a vast community of colleagues, friends, and family who supported me at every step. I will try to list as many names here as possible.

When I first began studying Japanese literature at UC Berkeley, I had zero interest in learning about premodern Japan, and even dreaded the required classical Japanese grammar course for the major. John Wallace and Mack Horton changed my mind in each of their classes, introducing me to the difficult yet fascinating lives of women alive several hundred years ago. At Harvard University, Edwin Cranston's mentorship along with his seminar on the *Man'yōshū* continued to stimulate my interest in women's writing, eventually leading me to the subject of this study. My biggest regret is that I could not write fast enough to share it with him. This dissertation is dedicated in part to his memory.

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Vita

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"The Role of Family and Anthology in the Creation of the *Man'yōshū*'s "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume," The International Society for the Research of Japanese Literature and Culture Workshop, Waseda University, Tōkyō, Japan, March 2018.

Introduction

Women and the *Man'yōshū*

In 1939 the Nippon gakujutsu shinkōkai 日本学術振興会, or the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), published an English translation of one thousand poems from the *Man'yōshū* 萬葉集 (c. late eighth century) with the purpose of introducing some of Japan's oldest poetry to international audiences. Throughout the introduction, the committee refers to the anthology's average poet and default subject as "the *Man'yō* man." This *Man'yō* man, according to the JSPS selection committee, possessed "an exuberant enthusiasm, a buoyant spirit and a highly imaginative and susceptible mind [that] gave to his emotional life a refreshing and colourful glow, as of the dawning sky, and produced this rich crop of poetry."[1] A deep love for the sovereign, reminiscent of a closeness a child feels for their parent, allegedly gave the *Man'yō* man a sense of purpose and defined the spirit of early Japanese society.

So dedicated is the committee to this idealized figure of the "*Man'yō* man," that a description of how people in ancient Japan worshiped the gods neglects to mention that the source of its information is a poem written by a *woman*.[2] This example from the 1939 JSPS translation is only one of many instances that minimize the role of Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue 大伴坂上郎女 (c. 695–active until 750),[3] the woman in question, as a representative of the *Man'yōshū* and poetic practice in Nara-period (710–794) Japan. Most scholarly treatment of

[1] Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai. *The* Man'yōshū*: One Thousand Poems Selected and Translated from the Japanese.* Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten (1940), xxxv.

[2] Ibid. xxxix. The poetic sequence in question is MYS III, Poems 379–380, also known as the "God-Worshiping Song." See pages 99–121 for a more detailed discussion in this dissertation.

[3] Hereafter referred to as "Lady Sakanoue," or "Sakanoue."

Sakanoue characterizes her work as limited to amorous topics, relegated to the realm of private affairs, and as a predecessor to the love poetry produced by Heian period (794–1185) female poets such as Ono no Komachi 小野小町 (c. ninth century) or Izumi Shikibu 和泉式部 (born c. 978).[4] This is in spite of a prolific body of work recorded in the anthology that showcases a variety of poetic forms.

The following study is a reconsideration of Lady Sakanoue's position within the *Man'yōshū* as more than just a love poet by contextualizing her works within the larger context of the anthology. Through a close examination of the paratextual information that surrounds her poems and the personas they create, I offer a new interpretation of her poetry in three volumes of the *Man'yōshū* as fulfilling a crucial function throughout the text of portraying relations between members of her family as well as with the sovereign and the imperial court during a time of political uncertainty. This project also expands our understanding of women's writing in premodern Japan by focusing on the Nara period. By considering the specific social conditions of women's literary production during this time, we can understand the possible avenues of poetic expression available to women as well as the limitations in terms of access and anthological representation based on their rank and relationships. As Sakanoue leaves behind the largest body of work among named women poets in the anthology, we can say that she is emblematic of the "*Man'yō* woman."

[4] For an example, see Suzuki Hideo. "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume–Onna-uta no honshitsu." *Man'yō no josei kajin*. Ono Hiroshi, ed. Tōkyō: Kasama Shoin, 2009.

Aims of the Study

Sakanoue is by far the best represented female poet in the *Man'yōshū*. With eighty-four poems attributed to her, she is second only to her nephew Ōtomo no Yakamochi 大伴家持 (c. 718–785), and tied with Japan's most celebrated early poet, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 (active latter half of seventh century). In spite of this research on Sakanoue's poetry has been rather limited in size and scope. English-language scholarship is virtually non-existent, with the exception of brief close readings by Edwin Cranston in his volume of translations published almost thirty years ago, *A Waka Anthology Volume One: The Gem-Glistening Cup* (1993).

While research in Japanese is more abundant, it has primarily focused on Sakanoue's position as a socially well-connected love poet, due to the abundance of amorous expressions found in her work as well as the notes surrounding many of her poems describing relationships with various high-ranking men. Most twentieth century *Man'yō* scholarship has relied on a methodological framework that takes the author or their individual works as the primary object of study; these approaches are known colloquially in Japanese scholarship as *sakka-ron* 作家論 and *sakuhin-ron* 作品論. Studies of Sakanoue within this framework of "author studies" have tended to focus on her gender and how her poetry represents some of the earliest examples of the *onna-uta* 女歌 ("women's songs") tradition in vernacular *waka* 和歌 poetry. The term *onna-uta* can be traced to the works of Japanese folklorist and literature scholar Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887–1953) and initially was used as a term for poetry written by women. In the latter half of the twentieth-century, Suzuki Hideo would define the literary category as follows:

> What we call a "woman's song" is a song where, in trying to compose poems about love and romantic sentiments, the basis of that expression is conceived negatively. When the topic is fixated on interpersonal relations, the sense of rebuking the addressee is strong. Conversely, when a "woman's song" is fixated on the self, it emphasizes shades of

> loneliness and a heart full of sorrow. The true nature of women's songs can be thought of as having their basis in these aspects. Even if the poet is a man, if he makes a composition starting from such ideas, then it is also an example of a "woman's song."[5]

In other words, the category of "women's songs" is defined not by the poet's gender, but instead by the adopted persona within the poem. At first glance, this redefinition appears to be a liberating one. Yet in practice, the notion that poetic expression is not determined by the author's gender is mostly applied to the ability of male poets to write in the poetic voice of a woman. Female poets, by contrast, continue to be read as representatives of their gender.

The notion that prominent women poets inherently belong in the category of "woman's songs" permeates research about Sakanoue. This seems to be based on the fact that many of Sakanoue's poems adopt a poetic persona known as the *matsu-onna* 待つ女, or "waiting woman," that is associated with *onna-uta*. Noguchi Keiko points out, however, the definition of *onna-uta* has not always been stable:

> The term "women's songs" is a vague one. "Women's songs" have been discussed until now without ever being properly defined. Although there has been little agreement about its definition, this [fact] has been ignored, and Sakanoue's poems in particular have been analyzed with the term "women's song." It seems that the term "women's song" has been used simply for the reason that [Sakanoue] is a woman. For this reason, scholarship on Sakanoue also appears vague.[6]

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[5] Suzuki Hideo, *Kodai waka-shi ron* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai, 1990), 54-55.
女歌とは、恋や恋の情調を詠もうとする、その発想の根源に否定的な契機がはらまれている歌ということになる。それが、対人性に執する場合に、相手を言いまかそうとする切り返しのひびきが強まり、逆に自己に執する場合には、孤独な内容や悲哀の心臓風景の色彩が強められるのである。そこに、女歌の本性があるように思われる。たとい男であっても、そのような発想に立って詠めば、それも女歌のうちの一つである。

[6] Noguchi Keiko, "Hyōryū suru 'Onna-uta' – Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no ron no tame ni," *Tenpyō Man'yō ron* (Tōkyō: Kanrin shobō, 2003), 221.
「女歌」という用語は、まさに漂流している。従来はそれがきちんと定義されないまま、「女歌」が論じられ続けてきた。とりわけ、定義が異なっているのに、それを無視して「女歌」という用語で分析されてきたのが大伴坂上郎女の歌である。単に郎女が女性だからという理由で、「女歌」という用語が使用されてきたようだ。従って、郎女論も漂流しているように見える。

As Noguchi suggests, the connection between the author's assumed gender and the category of "women's songs" has limited our understanding of Sakanoue's work.

Studies of Sakanoue usually adopt at least one of the following three approaches. The first reads her poetry to investigate the historical circumstances surrounding the position of women in Tenpyō 天平 (729–749) society. An example of this is Aso Mizue's *Man'yō wakashi ronkō* 万葉和歌史論考 (1992). The second pieces together the author's biography through information provided by the headnotes 題詞 (*daishi*) and endnotes 左注 (*sachū*, "notes to the left") to her poems—an example of this is Onodera Seiko's *Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume* 大伴坂上郎女 (1993). Although these historical or biographical approaches can provide useful insight into the life of female aristocrats in early Japan, they suffer from three major drawbacks: 1) a reliance on speculative guesswork, 2) a neglect of the poem as a literary artifact, and 3) a lack of interest in the relationship of the poem to the larger structure of the anthology.

The third approach has the inverse problem in that it focuses entirely on literary qualities of the poetry at the expense of the historical context that surrounds them. What I refer to as a literary approach generally focuses on the use of particular language and poetic voice of Sakanoue's poetry. These studies emphasize the relationship between her work with other poems in the *Man'yōshū* based on similar characteristics. A number of studies, including Asano Noriko's *Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no kenkyū* 大伴坂上郎女の研究 (1994) also stress Sakanoue's abilities as a love poet and an exemplar of "women's poetry," which is based on the conventional persona of the "waiting woman." One result of this approach is that the poems are removed from their historical and anthological context, and their specific significance is erased in the name of emphasizing their conventionality. In contrast to the individual treatment of Sakanoue's male relatives and peers, the categorizing of female poets under the rubric of

"women's poetry"[7] implies that women all experience the world the same and therefore produce similar kinds of writing, regardless of their social position or historical context, and reduces the significance of studying women authors to their gender.

In this dissertation I propose a different methodological framework that does not focus solely on Sakanoue's person or gender, and instead merges historical and literary contexts in order to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the figure of Sakanoue in the *Man'yōshū*. My strategy to combat the restrictive treatment of women poets and their works is to reconsider how we read both the poems themselves and the anthology in which they are collected. Drawing upon previous work by scholars such as Kōnoshi Takamitsu, Shinada Yoshikazu, and Torquil Duthie, my approach reads the poems of the *Man'yōshū* as elements that are organized into sequences and volumes to represent complex historical narratives that are socially and politically inflected. The *Man'yōshū* is not organized by author, but rather according to a variety of structural principles, including historical, literary, and geographical topics and themes. Each volume adheres to its own internal structure while sometimes sharing characteristics with other volumes outside it. The anthology is not merely a vessel to preserve exemplary literary works but is itself designed to be a literary representation of the age, one with its own particular sociopolitical agenda. Similarly, the inclusion of certain authors and the manner of their representation also reflects particular agenda on the part of the compiler, one who in all likelihood was a man—Sakanoue's nephew Yakamochi.

In addition to continuing a recent scholarly trend of reading the *Man'yōshū* itself as a text, this project pursues new questions such as how gendered spaces are created in the anthology

[7] For an example of this, see the *Seminā Man'yō no kajin to sakuhin* series edited by Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Sakamoto Nobuyuki (1995 – 2005). Hitomaro, Yakamochi, Tabito, and Okura all receive their own volumes. By contrast, Sakanoue is lumped into one volume with other women from the Tenpyō period.

and how specific gendered personas are deployed in support of its narratives. More broadly, it also reconsiders the position of female poets in the history of women's writing in premodern Japan. Much attention has been dedicated to the flourishing of aristocratic women's writing during Heian period, and to the prose writing of figures such as Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (c. 970s–c. 1019) and Sei Shōnagon 清少納言 (c. 966–c. 1025). While there have been a number of recent academic studies on literature produced by post-Heian aristocratic women, such as Christina Laffin's *Rewriting Medieval Japanese Women: Politics, Personality, and Literary Production in the Life of Nun Abutsu* (2013), there has been little attention paid to the Nara period or to the historical precedents of Heian women's literature. By considering the specific social conditions of women's literary production in the Nara period, this study contends that the history of women's writing in Japan should begin not in the Heian period, but in the eighth century, before the development of the *hiragana* script.

Misconceptions about the *Man'yōshū*

The *Man'yōshū*, translated either as *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* or *Collection for a Myriad Ages*, is Japan's oldest extant anthology of vernacular poetry.[8] With its massive size of

[8] These different interpretations of the title derive from two branches in the commentarial tradition. The first comes from Tendai scholar-monk Sengaku 仙覚 (1203-c. 1273). His influential commentary, *Man'yōshū chūshaku* 万葉集註釈 (1269), references Ki no Tsurayuki's opening line in the Kana Preface 仮名序 of the *Kokinshū* 古今集 in an interpretation of the title as "collection of myriad [leaves of] words." The second originates with Shingon cleric and *kokugaku* scholar Keichū 契沖 (1640-1701). In the *Man'yō daishōki* 万葉代匠記 (1690), he cites the title of the seventh imperial poetry anthology, *Senzai wakashū* 千載和歌集 (c. 1185) as justification for interpreting the meaning as "collection for myriad ages." For a synopsis of Japanese scholarly debates on the term over the centuries in English, see H. Mack Horton, *Traversing the Frontier: The* Man'yōshū *Account of a Japanese Mission to Silla in 736 - 737* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 433–436. For a history in English about the meaning of the graphs, focusing on uses of the character 葉 as "age" in Sinitic texts such and early Japanese histories such as the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), *Nihon kōki* 日本後期 (c. 840), and *Ryō no gige* 令義解 (833), a commentary on *ritsuryō* codes, see Torquil Duthie, Man'yōshū *and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 172–74. I prefer to translate the title as "Collection for a Myriad Ages," in order to emphasize a sense of futurity and posterity.

4,516 poems spanning twenty volumes, references to source texts that no longer exist, and multiple poetic categories, the *Man'yōshū* is a considerable repository of literary production from Early Japan, described by Robert Brower and Earl Miner as an "anthology of anthologies."[9] Yet until the Edo Period (1603–1868), when the success of the wood-block press helped the *kokugaku* 国学 ("nativist") movement disseminate ancient texts to a wider audience, this anthology did not circulate outside a select group of readers from the aristocracy, and in general its works were seldom upheld as models from which poets in later generations drew inspiration for their own compositions. Torquil Duthie summarizes its position within premodern Japan as "... [valuable] precisely because it was not a classic, but an 'early' text, a remnant of the pre-classical (i.e., pre-Heian) world."[10] In other words, the *Man'yōshū* for most of its existence was a relatively unknown and unintelligible text, the majority of its authors forgotten to history.

Starting in the Meiji Period (1868–1912), however, the reputation of the anthology experienced a renaissance. Members of the literati such as Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規 (1867–1908) and Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一 (1867–1927) reimagined or, as Shinada Yoshikazu describes it, "invented" the *Man'yōshū* as a national poetry anthology 国民歌集 (*kokumin kashū*) based on the complementary characteristics of *kokuminsei* 国民性 ("national character"), and *minzokusei* 民族性 ("character of the folk") or *minshūsei* 民衆性 ("character of the masses").[11] The former aspect in this construction of the text was used to stir nationalistic sentiments within the

[9] Robert H. Brower & Earl Miner, *Japanese Court Poetry*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961) 80.

[10] Torquil Duthie, "The *Man'yōshū* as a Pre-Classic," *New Horizons in Japanese Literary Studies*: *Canon Formation, Gender, and Media,* (Tōkyō: Bensey Publishing Inc., 2009) 20.

[11] For Shinada's argument in English, see Shinada Yoshikazu, "*Man'yōshū*: The Invention of a National Poetry Anthology," *Inventing the Classics. Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature,* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000) 31-50.

populace, especially during the years of the Asia-Pacific War (1931–1945), though it disappeared soon after. The latter aspects of this construction continued to permeate overviews about the *Man'yōshū* after Japan's defeat by Allied forces in 1945. Thus, the text was transformed from an archaic product created by the ruling class into the embodiment of an ancient, "authentic" poetic form inherited by the Japanese people.

The *Man'yōshū*, and its image as a text primarily based on indigenous "folk" literary traditions, was brought into the spotlight once more on April 1, 2019, when then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga announced the name of the new imperial era, *Reiwa* 令和, set to begin in May of that same year. Referring to the opening line of a preface written by Ōtomo no Tabito 大伴旅人 (665–731) for one of the anthology's most famous poetic sequences,[12] the Japanese government reported that the source for the new era name came not from a classical Sinitic text, but a work of Japanese literature. Prime Minister Shinzō Abe claimed that the name "emphasizes the beauty of Japan's traditional culture" and that it signals that "[the Japanese] nation's culture is born and nourished by people's hearts being drawn beautifully together."[13] In response, a number of individuals online were quick to point out that the character *rei* 令, which in modern Japanese means "command" or "order," sounded severe, as if demanding an obedience from the population not seen since Japan's empire-building phase in the first half of the twentieth century.[14]

[12] MYS V, Poems 815 – 846. The line reads, "At the time it is a good month in early spring; the weather is fine, and the breeze gentle." 于時初春**令**月　氣淑風**和** Unless otherwise specified, all translations are my own.

[13] Lies, Elaine, and Foster, Malcolm. 2019. "New Japanese imperial era 'Reiwa' takes name from ancient poetry." *Reuters*, March 31, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-emperor-idUSKCN1RD13X

[14] Ibid.

In addition, although the source text for *Reiwa* might have been the *Man'yōshū*, scholars noted that the specific line in Tabito's preface derives from older Sinitic texts such as Zhang Heng's *Gui tian fu* 帰田賦 ("Rhapsody on Returning to the Fields"), anthologized in the *Wen xuan* 文選 (*Selections of Refined Literature*, compiled in the sixth century),[15] which undermines the Japanese government's claim that this reign name is the first to derive from indigenous sources. Furthermore, as Shinada Yoshikazu argues in an article critiquing Abe's understanding of the phrase, Tabito's reference to Sinitic texts can be interpreted both as a critique of the political machinations of the imperial court, as well as a statement regarding the experience of literary companionship when reading texts from another place and time.[16] From all of this, it is clear that the Japanese government's understanding of the source of the new reign name derived not from any understanding of the *Man'yōshū* itself, but from twentieth-century misconceptions about the anthology as an "indigenous" text.

Another misconception about the *Man'yōshū* that persists to this day is that all of its most prominent authors are men because it is a "masculine" text. From Ki no Tsurayuki's praise of Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and Yamabe no Akahito 山部赤人 (d. 736) in the *Kana* Preface of the tenth-century imperial anthology *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (c. 906)[17] to eighteenth century *kokugaku* scholar Kamo no Mabuchi's 賀茂真淵 (1697–1769) admiration of the *Man'yōshū* as

[15] Ozawa Satoshi. 2019. "'Nihon ga konnanna toki, *Man'yōshū* wa hayaru' Reiwa wa rekishiteki tenkan." April 1, 2019. https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASM3Y7524M3YULZU027.html

[16] Shinada Yoshikazu. "'Reiwa' kara ukabiagaru Ōtomo no Tabito no messeiji." *Tanka kenkyū* 76, no. 5 (2019), 48–53.

[17] Translation from Duthie (unpublished), "Although songs have been transmitted since ancient times, it is only from the reign of Nara that they became widespread. Perhaps it was because in that reign the sovereign knew the significance of song? In that reign, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, of upper third rank, was the sage of song. This was surely because sovereign and subject were united as one… Furthermore, there was a person called Yamabe no Akahito whose songs were wonderful and extraordinary. It was difficult for Hitomaro to place himself over Akahito, or Akahito beneath Hitomaro." (7–8)

a “masculine” anthology in comparison to the “feminine” traits of the *Kokinshū*, due to the direct nature of its poetic expressions,[18] the association between the *Man'yōshū* and its male poets has been firmly established in the imagination of the text.

Granted, the general perception that the *Man'yōshū* is defined by its male poets is not baseless. When it comes to volumes with named poets, men are overwhelmingly more represented than women. In the table below, I include the number of poems attributed to each author and the books in which their person appears, and divide the authors into two columns. The left side lists women poets and the right side men:

Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue 大伴坂上郎女	84 (Volumes 3, 4, 6, 8, 17–19)	Ōtomo no Yakamochi 大伴家持	473[19] (Volumes 3, 4, 6, 8, 16–20)
Lady Kasa 笠女郎	29 (Volumes 3, 4, 8)	Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂	84 (Volumes 1–4, 15)
Maiden Sano no Otogami 狭野弟上娘子	23 (Volume 15)	Ōtomo no Tabito 大伴旅人	60 (Volumes 3–6, 8)
Princess Nukata 額田王	12 (Volumes 1, 2, 4, 8)	Yamanoue no Okura 山上憶良	60 (Volumes 1–3, 5, 6, 8, 9)
Lady Ki 紀郎女	12 (Volumes 4 & 8)	Yamabe no Akahito 山部赤人	50 (Volumes 3, 6, 8, 17)
Elder Daughter of Sakanoue 大伴坂上大嬢	11 (Volumes 4 & 8)	Nakatomi no Yakamori 中臣宅守	40 (Volume 15)
Princess Ōku 大伯皇女	6 (Volume 2)	Kasa no Kanamura 笠金村	30 (Volumes 3, 6, 8)
Empress Jitō 持統天皇	5 (Volumes 1 & 2)	Prince Yuhara 湯原王	19 (Volumes 3, 4, 6, 8)

[18] Kamo no Mabuchi, “Niimanabi” にひまなび *Kamo no Mabuchi zenshū* 19. Inoue Minoru, ed. Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1977.

[19] Out of the 473 poems attributed to Yakamochi, only 147 are recorded in the first sixteen volumes. The bulk of his poetry is found in the last four books often described by scholars as a kind of “poetic diary.” 歌日記 He is still by far the most represented poet in the anthology, but the gap is not as big between him and Hitomaro if we consider this fact.

Most *Man'yō* poetry by named female poets is found in just three volumes: II, IV, and VIII which all contain at least one section of *sōmon* 相聞 poetry, defined primarily as personal exchanges between noble men and women, through there are plenty of examples of exchanges between members of the same gender. The majority of both Sakanoue's work and other top-ranking women in the *Man'yōshū* are classified under this category of poetry. While male authors such as Yakamochi and Prince Yuhara also have contributions in this specific poetic mode, men as a whole simply have more compositions in more poetic categories recorded in their name across the anthology. It is not unusual for men to outrank women in terms of contributions for a poetic anthology, but it is important to point out that, in the specific case of the *Man'yōshū*, the text is indeed mostly comprised of compositions by male poets.

Sakanoue is a notable exception to this. Compared to other women poets in the *Man'yōshū*, moreover, Sakanoue also has several examples of *banka* 挽歌 (elegies), *zōka* 雑歌 (miscellaneous poems), and *hiyuka* 比喩歌 (metaphorical poems) included in the anthology. In addition, Sakanoue's body of work includes poems written in the poetic forms of the *chōka* 長歌 and *sedōka* 旋頭歌, which are closely associated with the *Man'yōshū* and early Japanese poetry, whereas most other compositions by women are in the ubiquitous *tanka* 短歌 form that dominates the corpus of premodern Japanese poetry.[20] Because of the wide range of poetry attributed to her, Sakanoue can be considered as not only one of the definitive poets from Japan's early period, but also *the* representative of women's cultural production during this time.

[20]A *tanka,* or "short poem," is a verse that follows a five-line, 5-7-5-7-7 pattern. A *chōka,* or a "long poem," is a verse that 5-7-5…7-7 syllabic pattern for an unspecified number of lines longer than five, and a *sedōka,* or "head repeating poem," is one that follows a six-line, 5-7-7-5-7-7 pattern.

Sakanoue's presence in the anthology exceeds some of the anthology's most well-known poets, such as her half-brother Tabito and his associate Yamanoue no Okura 山上憶良 (660?–733?) along with notable court poets Yamabe no Akahito and Kasa no Kanamura (dates unknown). Her works appear in more volumes than most of the men listed above, too. In this way, Sakanoue and her body of work can be considered just as representative (if not more so) of poetic practice in early Japan. Because of the persistent narrative pervading the *Man'yōshū*'s image as a predominantly masculine text, however, Sakanoue had never seriously been considered as a representative of *Man'yō* poetry when it came to canon formation. Furthermore, Sakanoue and other female poets from her age have largely been left out of introductory textbooks and translations for the *Man'yōshū* and classical literature.[21] An aim of this study, therefore, is not only to reconsider women's writing in relation to the text of the *Man'yōshū,* but also to propose a new image of the anthology itself as a text containing a multiplicity of gendered voices and personas, organized as such in order to memorialize a comprehensive vision of the Yamato court. Sakanoue is one of many figures in such a text, but she stands out as one its most predominant authors.

Assembled by the Text: Who was Sakanoue?

As the daughter of an aristocratic family whose lineage claimed origins in the divine age of the gods, Lady Sakanoue naturally moved among the highest echelons of early Japanese society. Her father Ōtomo no Yasumaro 大伴安麻呂 (d. 714) served in the Jinshin War 壬申の

[21] For examples in English, see entries for the *Man'yōshū* in Shirane, Haruo, ed. *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600*. New York: Columbia University Press (2007), and Horton, H. Mack. "*Man'yōshū*" *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature.* Shirane, Haruo, Tomi Suzuki, and David Lurie, eds. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press (2016).

乱 of 672 as a messenger between his uncle Fukei 大伴吹負 (d. 683) and Prince Ōama 大海人皇子, the eventual victor of the war who would be known to history as Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇 (d. 686, r. 673–686).[22] As a result of both his family's and his own personal service to Prince Ōama's cause, Yasumaro eventually became one of the highest-ranking members in the Council of State 太政官 (*daijōkan*), achieving the rank of senior counselor 大納言 (*dainagon*) in 705. Her mother, known only as the Ishikawa Lady 石川内命婦 (dates unknown), not only performed the role of *ōtoji* 大刀自 for the Ōtomo, but also came from a bloodline that originated from the influential Soga lineage 蘇我氏.[23] With such high-ranking parentage, it is no surprise that Sakanoue was apparently married to one of Emperor Tenmu's sons, Prince Hozumi 穂積親王 (d. 715), likely in order to solidify relations between the imperial family and these noble lineages. Following Hozumi's death, Sakanoue seemed to have at least a brief affair with high-ranking statesman Fujiwara no Maro 藤原麻呂 (695–737) before remarrying back into the Ōtomo lineage, giving her half-brother Sukunamaro 大伴宿奈麻呂 (dates unknown) two daughters. The elder would eventually marry her cousin Yakamochi in 739, while the younger married a scion of another major branch in the Ōtomo lineage.

At some point between 728 and 730, Sakanoue seems to have joined her other half-brother Tabito in Dazaifu when he was assigned Governor-General 帥, and possibly mentored

[22] In the *Nihon shoki*, it is recorded that Ōtomo no Fukei and his brother Makuta 大伴馬来田 (d. 683) did not initially lend their support to Prince Ōama, pretending to be ill. After ascertaining that the prince was the rightful successor, Makuta joined Ōama immediately. Fukei delayed, and instead masqueraded as Ōama's eldest son Prince Takechi 高市皇子 (c. 654–696) in order to ambush an enemy camp. After capturing some princes and high-ranking nobles, Fukei sent Yasumaro along with two other messengers to tell Ōama of his victory. Delighted by his exploits, Ōama appointed Fukei as a general. For the related passages, see SNKBZ *Nihon shoki* 3, 318–19 and 321–25, and Aston, W.G., *Nihongi*, 309–11.

[23] Onodera Seiko. *Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume*. Tōkyō: Kanrin Shobō, 1993.

Yakamochi while he made some of his earliest compositions recorded in the *Man'yōshū*. Following the family's return to the capital at the end of 730, Sakanoue presided over various events involving the lineage, from private family banquets, to the worship of a clan god, and a funeral procession for a Buddhist nun who was closely associated with the Ōtomo lineage. She traveled between various residences at Saho, Tomi, and Taketa, and kept up correspondences with not just family relatives, but also the sovereign himself. Sakanoue then lived in the capital for the rest of her days after Yakamochi came of age to lead the Ōtomo lineage, writing to her daughter and him during his appointment as Governor of the Etchū region 越中国 between 746 and 751.

Most of Sakanoue's biography described above, excluding details about her father Yasumaro's career, is not recorded in any imperial or lineage histories. Instead, it is pieced together from paratextual elements surrounding many poems included in the *Man'yōshū.* In this way, we can think of the figure of Sakanoue as both emerging from the text yet inextricably bound to it. While previous studies have mined the information in the headnotes and endnotes in order to create the story of Sakanoue's life, on the whole they have not addressed how this story functions within the larger historical context of the court or her family's political standing during the mid-eighth century as portrayed in the *Man'yōshū*.

The Ghost of the Prince Nagaya Incident

Many poems and volumes in the *Man'yōshū* contain both implicit and explicit references to major political events. One of the most impactful for the Ōtomo lineage during Sakanoue's lifetime was the Prince Nagaya Incident 長屋王事件 in 729, one year after Tabito was sent away from the capital to Dazaifu in order to serve as its Governor-General. Prince Nagaya 長屋王

(676 or 684–729) was the son of Prince Takechi 高市皇子 (c. 654–698), Emperor Tenmu's eldest son who eventually became Chancellor of the Realm 太政大臣 (*daijō daijin*) during the late seventh century.[24] Takechi is memorialized in the *Man'yōshū* as a war hero who fought for his father in the Jinshin War of 672.[25] Prince Nagaya himself rose to political prominence in the eighth-century, first becoming senior counselor in 718 before rising to the position of Minister of the Right 右大臣 (*udaijin*) in 721 following the death of the most powerful statesman at the time, Fujiwara no Fuhito 藤原不比等 (659–720). As an imperial descendant and a high-ranking statesman, with direct connections to the throne since his main wife Princess Kibi 吉備内親王 (d. 729) was a sister of Empress Genshō 元正天皇 (680–748, r. 715–724), Prince Nagaya was highly influential in court politics during the 720s, and the Ōtomo were among his allies.

Fuhito and his descendants were not, however. For years the Fujiwara lineage had been maneuvering for more control over the court, marrying their daughters into the imperial household and siring crown princes and princesses. Fuhito first married his daughter Miyako 藤原宮子 (d. 754) to Emperor Monmu 文武天皇 (683–707, r. 697–707). Though Miyako never became Empress Consort 皇后 (*kōgō*), she did give birth to the crown prince, known later in history as Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇 (701–756, r. 724–749). Her younger sister Asukabehime 安宿媛 (701–760) married Shōmu when he was a prince, and *did* eventually became Empress Consort in 729 following the events of the Prince Nagaya Incident.

[24] SNKBZ *Nihon shoki* 3 (1994), 504–5.

[25] See Duthie, Torquil, Man'yōshū *and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan*. Leiden: Brill (2014), Chapter 8: "The Tenmu Myth," 297–320.

As a descendant of two branches of the imperial house (Tenmu and his elder brother, Emperor Tenchi 天智天皇 [626–672, r. 661–672]) whose father would likely have been made crown prince were it not for his untimely death, Prince Nagaya was naturally a threat to the Fujiwara lineage's ambitions for the throne. After Shōmu and Asukabehime's firstborn baby son mysteriously died, Fuhito's four sons accused Nagaya and members of his clique of cursing the child, and sentenced him, Princess Kibi, and most of his male descendants to death by suicide. The only sons spared were those born from another of Fuhito's daughters.[26] A later entry in the *Shoku Nihongi* would exonerate Prince Nagaya, claiming that the charges against him were false.[27] Whatever the circumstances surrounding the death of Shōmu's son, the Fujiwara seized an opportunity to oust their political opponents, and subsequently filled top positions in the Council of State with their family and allies. In this way, the Fujiwara controlled the court for almost a decade.

The Prince Nagaya Incident remained a specter haunting the imperial court for a long time after, and its traces linger behind many poems compiled in the *Man'yōshū*. In particular, inferences can be found in volumes with many contributions from the Ōtomo lineage, especially those coming from Tabito and his associates down in Dazaifu. While previous scholarship has analyzed poetry by these men using the incident as a framework, interpreting these works as expressions of displeasure and anger over Nagaya's unwarranted death,[28] it has not considered the significance of Sakanoue's works in this context. This is odd because Tabito died a few years after the incident while Yakamochi was still a boy, seemingly leaving a gap in Ōtomo leadership

[26] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 205–7.

[27] Ibid., 341–43.

[28] Shinada Yoshikazu has written numerous articles providing this interpretation. For a selection of works, see the entries for his 2019 and 2020 articles in the bibliography.

that was then filled by Sakanoue, or at least that is the impression conveyed in the *Man'yōshū*. In general, Sakanoue's poetry has not been described as containing any political dimension at all, and most analyses only consider her poetry within the context of inner family politics when they adopt a sociohistorical approach. By adopting an anthological and historical approach to her works, however, we are able to see how the figure of Sakanoue as both poet and representative of her lineage functions in the text as a means of keeping the Ōtomo lineage together and in proximity to the imperial family during a time when they and their political allies were weak.

Methodology

This study positions Sakanoue within the overall framework of the *Man'yōshū* and demonstrates how the relationship between her poetry and the structure of the anthology affects how we read both. Taking inspiration from Michel Foucault's conception of the "author function,"[29] I consider the "Lady Sakanoue" that appears in the *Man'yōshū* as a means of classifying certain poems and sequences as belonging to a figure emerging from the text. In addition, my conceptual framework adopts elements of narrative theory such as Gérard Genette's concept of *paratext* in order to consider how "secondary" aspects of the *Man'yōshū,* such as the headnotes prefacing the poems, the endnotes that follow them, and the order in which poems are placed, create additional layers of meaning for both individual poems and entire volumes.

When taken in conjunction with the content of the poems themselves, these paratextual aspects suggest that the *Man'yōshū* contains two distinct but interrelated "narratives" that are constructed through repeated patterns, motifs, and themes. The first narrative revolves around the

[29] See Foucault, Michel, "What is an Author?" Bouchard, Donald and Simon, Sherry, trans. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Bouchard, Donald, ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (1977), 113–38.

legitimization of the imperial family's rule over the Japanese archipelago, while the second can be described as a story of the Ōtomo, the aristocratic lineage to which Sakanoue belonged, and its relationship to the throne. I argue that the format of the text constructs Sakanoue as a pivotal figure within the two narratives surrounding the history of the imperial court and destiny of the Ōtomo lineage during Emperor Shōmu's reign following the Prince Nagaya Incident. The function of this figure changes between volumes, depending on each volume's specific themes and topics. The Sakanoue that appears in a volume on *sōmon* poetry is different from the Sakanoue that appears in a volume of *zōka* and *banka*. Likewise, the gendered poetic voices associated with Sakanoue, such as the persona of a woman waiting for her lover to visit her, are co-opted into these political narrative frameworks.

Outline of Chapters

This study is divided into three chapters, each covering the first three volumes in which Sakanoue's poetry appears, though not necessarily in numerical order. Chapter One, entitled, "From Maiden to Matriarch: Sakanoue as Protagonist of Volume IV," begins with a book dedicated to *sōmon* poetry that also happens to contain the most contributions from Sakanoue in the entire anthology. Despite their image as devoid of political meaning, I argue that *sōmon* exchanges actually gesture toward political narratives through depicting various social relations at court. Given that the majority of Sakanoue's poems are in this volume, this makes her one of its obvious central figures. Paratextual elements such as headnotes and endnotes provide biographical descriptions in order to impart to the reader that she is a significant person and poet. Her exchanges with various members of her family, a Fujiwara statesman, and Emperor Shōmu showcase her wide social network along with the types of relationships and power dynamics that can be conveyed in this poetic mode as well. All of these elements combine effectively to

construct the author herself, imbuing Sakanoue with a kind of literary protagonism that can steer the political destiny of her clan in the wake of the Prince Nagaya Incident and Tabito's death by facilitating relationships through poetic composition.

Chapter Two, entitled, "Performing the Roles of Clan Matriarch and Loyal Subject: Sakanoue in Volume III," focuses on Sakanoue's contributions to the *zōka* and *banka* categories in the third book, including some of her most well-known compositions, the God-Worshiping Song 祭神歌 and the Elegy for the Nun Rigan 悲嘆尼理眼死去歌. In this volume, Sakanoue is portrayed not as a romantic heroine nor a doting mother, but as a figure with social obligations within the Ōtomo family structure and as a member of the larger court centered around the sovereign. It demonstrates how women in Sakanoue's position had access to poetic voices utilized in public modes of discourse, though it was in a limited capacity compared with their male relatives. I argue that this in part was due to the fact that women seemed to gradually disappear from social public spaces in the eighth century, and this consequently was reflected in their disappearance from the textual space of *zōka* and *banka* collections in the *Man'yōshū.* Since Sakanoue functions as an intermediary between Tabito and Yakamochi within the body of the text, she is spared from a similar fate as other female poets.

Chapter Three, entitled, "Alternative Histories and Narratives: Sakanoue's Poems in Volume VI" turns to Sakanoue's function in a volume of poetry designed to commemorate the first half of Emperor Shōmu's reign. Considering the book's structure and the authors represented in the body of the text, it is clear that Volume VI was compiled in order to present a particular version of Shōmu's court that did not necessarily align with historical reality. In this book Sakanoue exhibits a form of protagonism similar to male courtiers such as Tabito as she travels to and from the capital and participates in drinking parties with her associates, positioning

her within a public or public-adjacent realm. While Volume VI arguably presents the most "historical" version of Sakanoue, its paratexts providing much of the information that makes up Sakanoue's biography as we know it, her poems in this volume after Tabito's death provide a diversion away from events occurring in the sovereign's court when the Fujiwara lineage were staunchly in control. As a result, Sakanoue's figure becomes implicitly aligned with a political faction that emerged in opposition to the Fujiwara lineage in the 730s, headed by former prince and statesman Tachibana no Moroe 橘諸兄 (684–757).

The fact that so much information is known about Sakanoue from these three volumes alone is likely due to the efforts of her nephew Yakamochi, who is believed to have been the final compiler of the *Man'yōshū*. In the conclusion to this study, I briefly discuss how his position in the Yamato court after he came of age might have informed his framing of the lineage from which he came. Yakamochi's close relationship with Sakanoue, as exhibited throughout their exchanges in their anthology, provides an explanation for Sakanoue's overrepresentation as compared to other women writers. Similar to Volume VI, however, there is a possible ideological motivation involved too. As the scion of an ancient lineage once favored by the sovereign, Yakamochi seemed motivated to recuperate his family's image following a series of misfortunes in addition to enshrining their works within the anthology. Since Sakanoue appears to never be directly involved with the political intrigue running rampant in the court, her figure can function as a pure expression of the Ōtomo lineage's devotion to the imperial throne, demonstrated through her corpus of poetry that exhibits many of the poetic forms and categories that came to define poetic practice in early Japan.

What's in a Name? Translating the name "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume"

Throughout the years of researching and writing this dissertation, I have pondered over the best way to translate the author's name. The name by which this woman is called, Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume, can be translated in a couple of ways, and all have subtle changes in nuance. The endnote to her first exchange in Volume IV gives the following explanation as an origin for her moniker:

> 郎女家於坂上里　仍族氏号曰坂上郎女也
> *Since the lady resided in the village of Sakanoue,*[30] *her kinsmen called her the Lady of Sakanoue.*

This sentence is the only explanation given for the author's name in the entire *Man'yōshū*. Given the fact that "Sakanoue" refers to a location name, I decided to translate *Sakanoue no Iratsume* as "the Lady of Sakanoue" in this instance.

As is already apparent in this introduction, in general I refer to the subject of this study as "Lady Sakanoue," or "Sakanoue," which implies that "Sakanoue" is her given name. It is not. Just as with authors such as Murasaki Shikubu or Sei Shōnagon, Sakanoue's name derives from her relation to other things and should not be assumed as her actual name. Writing "the Lady of Sakanoue" every time I refer to the author, however, would be time-consuming. For the sake of expediency, I decided to shorten her name to "[Lady] Sakanoue." For those who wonder why I do not refer to the author as "Lady Ōtomo," when my argument hinges on her position within her family and lineage, the answer is simple. To call her as such creates confusion with Tabito's primary wife, who is already referred to in the text as "the Ōtomo lady" or "Lady Ōtomo." The *Man'yōshū* distinguishes the two women by using place names, and I will do so as well.

[30] The village of Sakanoue is speculated to have been located in the neighborhood of Hōren-Kitamachi 法蓮北町 in modern day Nara. It sits between the palace at Heijōkyō and Tōdai-ji Temple.

Chapter One

From Maiden to Matriarch: Sakanoue as Protagonist of Volume IV

Introduction: The Politics of *Sōmon* Poetry

Out of the eighty-four poems ascribed to Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue throughout the entire collection, thirty-seven of them are recorded in the fourth volume of the *Man'yōshū*, which is dedicated to *sōmon* poetry. Frequently translated as "love poetry" or "private exchanges," *sōmon* poems describe feelings of longing that are often amorous in nature and between men and women, but occasionally also between members of the same gender. Many of these poems only show one side of an exchange, sometimes with both parties named but often with only one person identified in the text.[31] As the bulk of major female poets in the *Man'yōshū* appear only in volumes or sections dedicated to *sōmon* poetry, and even a significant portion of Sakanoue's work are categorized as *sōmon,* there is a strong association between this type of poetry and women as represented in the anthology.[32]

Compared to Volumes I, II and III, which either only include *zōka* (I), or multiple categories (II and III), Volume IV contains *only sōmon* poetry, which are generally read as "love poems," that depict amorous dalliances between members of the Yamato court and are removed from the realm of politics. An example of this view can be found in Kinoshita Masatoshi's

[31] Lady Sakanoue has examples of both scenarios. An example of the former would be Poems 723 and 724, a *chōka* and *hanka* set sent to the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue 坂上大嬢, and an example of the latter would be Poems 619 and 620, her poems on the topic of *urami*, or resentment. While the text makes no mention of a recipient, most scholars assume that the *urami* poems were composed with someone in mind and sent to them.

[32] Out of the top six named female poets represented in the *Man'yōshū*, two only appear in Volumes Four and Eight, a book dedicated to seasonal poetry in the *zōka* and *sōmon* categories (the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue and Lady Ki). Lady Kasa has three poems in Volume III, compared to twenty-four in Volume IV. Princess Nukata's poetry is mostly recorded in the first two volumes, but those books are mainly dedicated to works from Japan's Asuka 飛鳥 period (538–710), and she was active at least two generations before the rest of the women mentioned here. Maiden Sano no Otogami's poems are recorded in a single sequence of exchanges with her partner Nakatomi no Yakamori in Volume XV and nowhere else.

outline of Volume IV in *Man'yōshū zenchū* 万葉集全注, where he compares Volume IV to other books such as Volumes III and VI. Despite acknowledging that much of Volume IV's content was created during an era of political uncertainty and turmoil, he maintains that this book cannot be read through a political lens because of its status as a volume of *sōmon* poetry:

> The influence of political history is comparatively small in Volume IV. Although the shadow of the Prince Nagaya Incident falls over Volume Three, it does not extend to this volume. Moreover, though the high officials [the Fujiwara brothers] passed away in succession because of the smallpox epidemic in Tenpyō 9 [737], and Tachibana no Moroe rose [to political power] in their stead, this does not appear on the surface of this volume. Emperor Shōmu's tour of the eastern provinces, which started during the Fujiwara no Hirotsugu Rebellion,[33] the relocation of the capital to Kuni-kyō,[34] and the gradual increase in political tensions influence the likes of Volume III and VI, but not this volume. If anything, the extent [of influence] is when Yakamochi, just after being newly married, thinks of the Elder Daughter living separately in a residence in the former capital Heijō from [the new capital] Kunikyō, and laments "their being held apart by a range of mountains," (Poem 765).[35] One of the reasons for this is because this volume is comprised only of *sōmon* poetry, and [the realm of] *sōmon* is the realm furthest away from politics.[36]

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[33] The Fujiwara no Hirotsugu Rebellion 藤原広嗣の乱 of 740 was an unsuccessful coup led by Hirotsugu (?–740), son of Fujiwara no Umakai 藤原宇合 (694–737). Unhappy with the shift in political power following the smallpox epidemic in 737 toward Tachibana no Moroe 橘諸兄 (687–757) and the faction aligned with Prince Nagaya before his death in 729, Hirotsugu charged various officials with corruption and raised an army in Dazaifu, Kyūshū. He was ultimately defeated by government forces. For more information, see SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 365-377, and Farris, William Wayne. *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military, 500–1300* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 63.

[34] The relocation of the capital to Kuni-kyō was in response to the various calamities that occurred during Emperor Shōmu's tenure in Nara, from the smallpox epidemic to Hirotsugu's rebellion.

[35] This line originally comes from a poem sent to Sakanoue's eldest daughter by her cousin (and husband), Yakamochi. MYS IV, Poem 765: "We are held apart by just a range of mountain—since the moon is fine, I wonder if Little Sister will come out to stand by the gate and wait for me?" (一重山隔れるものを月夜良み門に出で立ち妹か待つらむ) "Little Sister" was a common phrase used to refer to a wife or lover in this period.

[36] Kinoshita Masatoshi. *Man'yōshū zenchū* 4 (Tōkyō: Yūhikaku, 1983), 9–10.
この巻第四には政治史の影響は比較的に少ない。長屋王事件も巻第三にはその影を落としているが、この巻は直接の波及を受けていない。また天平九年の痘瘡大流行によって高官が相次いで薨じ、代わって橘諸兄が台頭したが、それもこの巻の表面には現われていない。広嗣の変に端を発した聖武天皇の東国巡幸、そして恭仁京遷都とようやく政局は緊張の度を加えて来るのだが、それとて巻第三、第六に与えたほどの影響はこの巻にはない。強いて言えば、新婚早々の家持が恭仁京から平城旧京の留守宅に離れ住む大嬢を思って「一重山隔れるものを」（七六五）と嘆いている程度のことはあった。それは一つにはこの巻が相聞だけの巻であり、相聞は政治から一番遠い世界だからであろう。

This perception of *sōmon* as inherently apolitical, due to the fact that they are defined as personal exchanges between people and often depict romantic love, pervades both Japanese and English-language scholarship as well as translations of *sōmon* poetry. Just as Kinoshita claims, there has historically been little consideration of the larger political implications that go into anthologizing these types of exchanges between members of the court. As women's contributions to the *Man'yōshū* fall under this poetic category, this means that they are also divorced from the realm of politics and relegated to the status of "love poets" moving within the private realm instead.

As Torquil Duthie has pointed out, however, "the history of *sōmon*… represents amorous relations and marriages as the key to reconfiguring relations of power at court."[37] Contrary to Kinoshita's assertion, the compiling of *sōmon* poetry into books such as the *Man'yōshū*'s Volume IV actually creates a representation of sociopolitical relations between members of the Yamato aristocracy through intimate and personal exchanges. There are a number of previous studies that have explored the relationship between poetic representations of romantic longing and their political contexts in ancient Japan. In the context of the Heian period, Gustav Heldt has examined how desire expressed between men in court poetry reveals hierarchies of rank and kinship.[38] More relevant to this study, however, is Shinada Yoshikazu's recent article, literally entitled, "the Politics of *Sōmon* Poetry." 相聞のポリティックス By reading Volume IV as a text rather than as a collection of individual poems, Shinada shows how significant portions of this book actually narrate a kind of political history centered around Emperor Shōmu's selection of an Empress Consort and the aftermath of the Prince Nagaya

[37] Duthie, Torquil. Man'yōshū *and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 191.

[38] Heldt, Gustav. "Between Followers and Friends: Male Homosocial Desire in Heian Court Poetry." In *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 33 (2007): 3-32.

Incident in 729.[39] Furthermore, Shinada argues that Volume IV's general structure creates a story about the Ōtomo lineage's relationships with the Fujiwara and royal lineages.[40] Though the subject matter in *sōmon* poems differs in comparison to the "public" poetic forms that fill Volumes I through III, such as the *banka* elegies and verses composed or sung at imperial banquets, Volume IV works in tandem with the previous volumes in order to provide a comprehensive picture of Yamato court politics in all its facets. Shinada's article is an important intervention in terms of understanding how *sōmon* poetry fits into that picture, providing much inspiration for this study.

Not much has yet been explored in regard to how poetic expressions of desire, yearning, or frustration that center on *women* illuminate certain power dynamics and competitive relationships in early Japan. As Lady Sakanoue is one of the most represented authors in Volume IV, it stands to reason that any narrative surrounding the Ōtomo lineage involves her at its center. Therefore, with Sakanoue's poetry as my focal point, I argue in this chapter that Volume IV—which is comprised in large part of *sōmon* exchanges involving the Ōtomo—is a text meant to showcase the Ōtomo lineage's social and political position in the Yamato court with Sakanoue as a protagonist within their narrative. I consider not only what kinds of relationships involving the Ōtomo are represented in poetry, but also *how* they are represented and who writes those relationships. For the Ōtomo, whose political power was waning in the eighth century as other lineages such as the Fujiwara were on the rise, this decline corresponds with the period during which the poetry recorded in Volume Four was composed.

[39] Shinada Yoshikazu. "Sōmon no poritikkusu—*Man'yōshū* maki yon ni kizamareta Shōmu chō seiji shi." *Kodai bungaku* (2019), 1-11.

[40] Ibid. 26.

Within the network of relationships involving the Ōtomo lineage, Lady Sakanoue stands out as a prominent figure for a number of reasons. For one, a significant portion of her poetry is collected in Volume IV, including representations of multiple relationships both within and outside the clan, from exchanges with relatives on both her paternal and maternal sides to an exchange with a member of the rival Fujiwara lineage and even a set of poems sent to Emperor Shōmu himself. It is possible not only to think of her as the central axis around which relations between the Ōtomo revolve, but also as a point at which the history of the Ōtomo lineage intersects with the history of the Yamato court that revolves around the figure of the sovereign.

Therefore, in order to move beyond the image of Sakanoue as mainly a love poet and demonstrate the significance of her position within the text of the *Man'yōshū*, it becomes necessary to reframe discussions about the poetic genre with which she is most associated and the volume in which the majority of her poems are contained. Following the example of previous studies by Kōnoshi Takamitsu, Shinada Yoshikazu, and Torquil Duthie, I approach the *Man'yōshū* not as a loose collection of poems, but rather as a text that constructs narrative sequences through paratextual elements such as the information surrounding individual poems as well as the general structure of entire books in the anthology. By considering these elements, it becomes possible to understand 1) how Volume IV represents the Ōtomo lineage's social and political situation in eighth century, and 2) Sakanoue's position within the volume as not just a mother, lover, and poet, but also as the *ietoji* 家刀自 or the head of her clan, navigating her family's way through troubling times.

In the following sections, I will first briefly introduce the concept of *paratext* and explain what I consider as such in the specific case of the *Man'yōshū*. Then I will outline the general structure of Volume IV in order to situate Sakanoue's poetry within its framework. Finally, the

last two sections will cover how Sakanoue is depicted at the beginning of the volume and toward the end of the volume through two of her most notable sequences. As I will demonstrate, Sakanoue is constructed by the text not only as a central figure within the Ōtomo clan, but also as an important figure in the history of the court through her relationships to other lineages such as the Fujiwara and the imperial throne. Relationships are established and broken through the poetry she composes for herself and others, as if she were writing a particular social history into existence.

Gérard Genette's *Paratext* and the Anthologization Process

I use the concept of "paratext," a term first coined by Gérard Genette, as it is useful in illuminating the relationship of Sakanoue's poetry to the overall text of Volume IV. In order to emphasize the fact that texts are not received by audiences "as is," unadorned and without some form of presentation, Genette creates a distinction between the body of the text itself and *paratext*, or the products that surround it such as an author's name, illustrations, or a preface.[41] These "products" can be created by the authors themselves, but generally are provided by entities other than the author, including editors, publishers, printers, illustrators, etc. In *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* Genette refers to such products that surround texts "literature in the second degree" in order to more clearly distinguish them from the "entire" or "essential" aspects of the text.[42] The "secondary" aspects of these literary works create a framework that

[41] Genette, Gérard, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press (1997), 1.

[42] Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree,* trans. Newman, Channa Newman & Doubinsky, Calude. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

influences the reception and interpretation of the text, and furthermore also have the function of transforming the reader's understanding of said text.

One thing to note is that the concept of paratext as defined by Genette was originally intended for published and printed books, and therefore may require some modification when applied to a manuscript book such as the *Man'yōshū*. For my purposes in this study, I take the "primary layer" of the *Man'yōshū* text to be a poem or set of poems composed by an individual poet, and use the term "paratext" to refer to the secondary layer of prefaces 序 (*jo*), headnotes, and endnotes. By separating the main body of poetry from the explanatory material that surrounds it, it becomes possible to see how poetic voices deployed by authors, such as "the waiting woman" that is prevalent in much of premodern East Asian poetry, are historically contextualized and can influence a reader's interpretation of the poem in question.

I also consider the structure of the *Man'yōshū* itself to be a kind of "paratext" that affects both its reception and its various interpretations. The order in which the songs are listed, the way a volume is structured using particular themes, and the intended arrangement of groups of poems or poets, can be recognized as "paratextual" frameworks provided by the compiler(s). It is also important to take into account which poets are selected for anthologization, and how they are arranged and portrayed in each volume based on relevant social relationships and historical events. In the case of Lady Sakanoue, her poems often appear in close proximity to those composed by her nephew, Yakamochi. In considering such aspects, a premodern "paratext" in this sense suggests a limited interpretation and reading, and thus is valuable in that it allows us to reconsider the kind of influence this has on readers. In other words, paratextual information in the *Man'yōshū* guides readers to specific interpretations of its poems.

By paying attention to the secondary paratextual layer of the *Man'yōshū*, it is possible to shift our focus from individual poems and poets toward a reading of the *Man'yōshū* anthology as a narrative text. Duthie has also argued for the importance of considering headnotes, endnotes, and sequence arrangements in our readings of *Man'yō* poetry, as it allows for new possible avenues of exploration in terms of larger patterns in the anthology.[43] By reading the *Man'yōshū* as a narrative, the reader is also able to reconsider the nature of lyric poetry within the anthology. Lyricism as it is commonly understood pertains to an individual's private sentiments. While the contents of many poems in the *Man'yōshū* express private emotion, this type of lyricism is not restricted to a single person. Rather, lyrical poetry in the *Man'yōshū* is always situated within specific historical moments and environments, aided by the paratextual information framing the poems. Duthie explains the type of lyricism contained in *Man'yōshū* as "[encompassing] both expressions of strictly individualized amorous emotion as well as the 'augmented' voices of praise or mourning that claim to represent the entire court," whose purpose is to memorialize both the sovereign and their subjects.[44]

Similar to scholars such as Duthie as well as Shinada Yoshikazu, my understanding of lyricism in the *Man'yōshū* overall is one that is centered on the figure of the sovereign and the aristocrats whom surround them. By broadening the definition of lyrical poetry, which can be used to describe many examples of *sōmon* poetry among others, it becomes possible to understand how the "narrative" or "story" about the Yamato court as inscribed in history takes the form of a poetry anthology and its volumes. Similarly, Sakanoue's poetic exchanges with family members and potential lovers can be interpreted on two different levels: the first in regard

[43] Duthie (2014), 406.

[44] Ibid, 415–16.

to her as an individual member of the Ōtomo lineage and the second in regard to the lineage's position in society. In Volume IV, Lady Sakanoue can be considered not only as an author whose works are scattered throughout the book, but also as a main axis that connects two "narratives" about the politics of the Yamato court and the position of the Ōtomo clan within it. In this sense, Sakanoue also can be understood as a node that creates "paratext" for Volume IV.

The Structure of Volume IV

Volume IV contains three hundred and nine poems, most of which are attributed to poets who were alive during the eighth century, with a handful of poems at the beginning that are dated earlier. It includes entries from some of the most notable poets in the anthology, including Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, Kasa no Kanamura, Ōtomo no Yakamochi, and of course Lady Sakanoue. Volume IV is generally viewed as a companion to book Volume III, which includes examples of the other major poetic forms encapsulated in the *Man'yōshū*, the *zōka*, *banka*, and *hiyuka*. These two volumes form a pair that is often compared with Volumes I and II, which are also often considered to be sibling texts. Volumes I and II contain poetry representative of the ancient period up through the reigns of Empress Jitō 持統天皇 (645–703, r. 690–697) and Emperor Monmu, whereas III and IV for the most part focus on poetry before and during the reign of Emperor Shōmu. Since both Volumes III and IV start with a few entries from the "ancient period" covered in Volumes I and II, they can be said to have a structure model that encompasses examples of ancient and "modern" poetry (at least for that time period).[45]

[45] Shinada Yoshikazu. "*Man'yōshū* no makimaki," *Man'yōshū jiten*. Inaoka Kōji, ed. (Tokyo: Gakutōsha, 1993), 397.

Similar to Volume II—which also contains *sōmon* poetry—Volume IV's opening poem comes from an era associated with a Naniwa sovereign, presumed to be either the legendary Emperor Nintoku 仁徳天皇 or Emperor Kōtoku 孝徳天皇 (596–654, r. 645–654):

> 難波天皇妹奉上在山跡皇兄御歌一首
> *A poem the Naniwa Sovereign's younger sister presented to her venerable elder brother in Yamato*
>
> 相聞
> *Personal Exchange*

一日社　人母待吉 (ひとひこそ　ひともまちよき)	If it is for one day, waiting is fine for others
長氣乎　如此所待者 (ながきけを　かくしまたえば)	But if I am to wait for days on end like this,
有不得勝 (ありかつましじ)	I shall not be able to last.[46]

While the author's identity is unknown, given that the Naniwa sovereign could be referring to Nintoku, scholars have speculated that the author could be his younger half-sister and wife Yata no Himemiko 八田皇女.[47] As a composition presented formally to a sovereign, this opening poem establishes the tone for the rest of Volume IV. It establishes *sōmon* poetry as consisting of expressions of longing and romance between members of the nobility, which are then situated within the context of the imperial realm as governed by the sovereign.

From there, poems proceed in relative chronological order, with the final poems ascribed to Yakamochi and his contemporaries, dating around 744. The following chart breaks down the structure of volume four into nine sections, though there is some overlap between them:

[46] MYS IV, Poem 484.

[47] While the *Man'yōshū* does not contain much biographical information on Emperor Nintoku or Yata no Himemiko, both figures appear in the *Kojiki* 古事記 and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, the two oldest existing texts in Japanese literature. According to these stories, Yata no Himemiko was one of Nintoku's wives, but bore him no children. As a result, a *minashiro* 御名代, or type of royal lineage, was established in her name. Cranston (1993), 40–41.

	General Description of Section	Notable Poets and Sequences
A	From the time of Legendary Rulers to the Establishment of the Capital in Heijōkyō (Poems 484-513)	Poem from the Naniwa Sovereign's younger sister (Poem 484), Composition by the Okamoto Sovereign (485–87), Contributions by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and his wife (496–99, 501–04)
B	Early years of the Nara Period up until Emperor Shōmu's ascension (Poems 514-48)	Fujiwara no Maro and Lady Sakanoue's Exchange (522–28), Emperor Shōmu's exchange with Unakami no Ōkimi (530–31)
C	Poems by the Dazaifu Poetic Circle (Poems 549-80)	Ōtomo no Miyori and Kamo no Ōkimi's exchanges (552, 556, 565), Ōtomo no Momoyo and Lady Sakanoue's poems (559–62, 563–64), Poems composed during Tabito's illness and return to the capital (566–78)
D	Poems by Women Associated with Yakamochi (Poems 581-620)	The Elder Daughter of Sakanoue's first exchange with Yakamochi (581–84), Lady Kasa's twenty-four poems to Yakamochi (587–610), Sakanoue's composition on *urami* 怨恨 ("resentment," 619–20)
E	Poems Associated with the Imperial Family (Poems 621-45)	Prince Yuhara's exchange with a maiden (631–42), Lady Ki's poems on *urami* (643–45)
F	Exchanges Primarily Involving Lady Sakanoue (Poems 646-71)	Sakanoue's exchanges with Ōtomo no Surugamaro (646–649, 651–655), Sakanoue's exchange with Abe no Mushimaro (665–67)
G	Transitioning from Sakanoue to Yakamochi (Poems 672-726)	Yakamochi's exchanges with women (705–06, 707–08, 714–20), Sakanoue's exchanges with Emperor Shōmu and the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue (721, 723–26)
H	Poems about the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue (Poems 727-61)	Yakamochi and the Elder Daughter's exchanges (727–55), Poems to the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue from the Elder Daughter of Ōtomo no Tamura (756–59)
I	After the Establishment of the Capital at Kunikyō (Poems 762-92)	Lady Ki's exchange with Yakamochi (762–64, 775–81), Yakamochi's poems to the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue (770–74), Fujiwara no Kusumaro and Yakamochi's exchange (786–92)

Section A covers roughly poetry from ancient times to the period where the capital was moved to Heijōkyō (710). Some poetry in this section is attributed to poets and figures of semilegendary status. Section B contains poetry from the early years of what we now call the Nara Period, ending right about the time of Emperor Shōmu's ascent to the throne in 724. This section marks Sakanoue's first appearance in Volume Four with an exchange between her and Fujiwara no Maro, one of the four Fujiwara ministers who all eventually succumb to smallpox. From this point onward, all sections contain poetry composed during Emperor Shōmu's reign (724–749). Section C contains poetry composed during Ōtomo no Tabito's tenure as the Governor of Dazaifu, a military stronghold for Japan during this time period. Notable entries in this section include the exchange between Ōtomo no Miyori 大伴三依 (d. 774) and Prince Nagaya's daughter, Kamo no Ōkimi 賀茂女王 and poems exchanged upon Tabito's return to the capital at the end of his tenure. Section D primarily contains poetry from Yakamochi's many female associates, such as Lady Kasa 笠女郎 and the Elder Daughter of Ōtomo no Sakanoue 大伴坂上大嬢, but also includes Lady Sakanoue's *chōka* and *hanka* set on *urami* 怨恨, or resentment.

Besides being comprised entirely of *sōmon* exchanges, one of Volume IV's most notable characteristics is the large presence of the Ōtomo lineage and their associates. When Volume IV's structure is broken down into the above parts, this becomes all the more apparent, as over half of the sections outlined are concern mainly with their affairs. Of particular note is the time period covered between Sections D through F. Since the dates ascribed to some of these poems occur after Tabito's death (731) but still during Yakamochi's adolescent years, we can think of this era as a transitional period for the Ōtomo lineage, where one generation is in the midst of replacing the other. Lady Sakanoue's poems dominate this section, with many of them in the

form of exchanges with her male relatives Ōtomo no Surugamaro 大伴駿河麻呂 (d. 776) and Abe no Mushimaro 阿倍虫麻呂 (d. 752). In the latter portion of IV (Sections G through I), however, we see a shift in focus from Sakanoue to Yakamochi. As Yakamochi comes of age, compositions attributed to him also increase in number. Here Sakanoue appears as a more distant figure with her compositions coming from lands far away from the capital, limited to correspondences with the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue and Emperor Shōmu.

In addition, while there is a section that revolves around poetry sent to the Elder Daughter from her mother, Yakamochi, and her half-sister the Elder Daughter of Tamura 大伴田村大嬢, the Elder Daughter's responses are few in number, and they are only to Yakamochi. Volume IV's final section covers the period after the capital is briefly moved to Kuni-kyō 恭仁京 (741). It ends with an exchange between Yakamochi and Fujiwara no Kusumaro 藤原久須麻呂 (d. 764) presumably in regard to Kusumaro's marriage proposal to Yakamochi's young daughter.

From this outline of Volume IV, it becomes clear that the book is primarily focused on the relationships between members of the Ōtomo lineage as well as their relationships with other lineages, including the imperial family.[48] The next questions that need to be addressed, then, are why Sakanoue appears to be such a focal point and what purpose does the inclusion of her exchanges with her various relatives and other powerful lineages serve a larger story about the history of the Yamato court? In other words, what kind of narrative is Volume Four telling about Emperor Shōmu's reign, and how does Sakanoue's poetry fit into that narrative?

[48] This has also been noted in the second appendix entitled "*Man'yōshū* in Overview" in Horton (2012).

Lady Sakanoue's Exchange with Fujiwara no Maro

Sakanoue's first appearance in Volume Four is an exchange with Fujiwara no Maro 藤原麻呂 (695–737), son of Fujiwara no Fuhito 藤原不比等 (659–720) and founder of one of the four great houses of the Fujiwara.[49] While the high point of Fujiwara domination over Japanese court politics would not occur for another few hundred years, the beginnings of their influence at court can be traced back to the founder of the lineage, Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614–669), and particularly to his son Fuhito. Fujiwara power in eighth century culminated with the birth of Fuhito's grandson, Crown Prince Obito 首皇子 (Emperor Shōmu) by his older daughter Fujiwara no Miyako 藤原宮子 (?–754), and the marriage of the crown prince to his younger daughter Asukabehime 安宿媛 (701–760).[50] In addition to marrying into the imperial house, members of the Yamato court lineages sought marriage alliances with other lineages as a means of establishing connections and soothing political tensions between themselves. As scions of high-ranking lineages within the Japanese court at this time,[51] a union between Maro and Sakanoue would have been potentially advantageous for both groups. This exchange—designed as a representation of Maro's courtship of Sakanoue—appears in the first half of Volume IV, with three contributions by Maro, and four by Sakanoue:

[49] The four houses were Fujiwara no Fusasaki's Northern Branch 北家, Maro's Ministerial Branch 京家 branch, Muchimaro's Southern Branch 南家, and Umakai's Ceremonial Branch 式家. The Northern Branch would eventually establish claim to the position of regent in the Heian period and for the most part dominate the throne and court through their use of marriage politics. This involved marrying their daughters into the imperial family and bearing sons. Because these women lived in separate quarters from their sovereign spouses, many crown princes were raised in the presence of their material grandfathers (the regent), who were allowed to visit their daughters. This meant that the regent would have great influence over their imperial grandchildren.

[50] It was common practice up until the eighth century for members of the imperial family to marry half-siblings and cousins, thereby consolidating power.

[51] As of 684, the Fujiwara lineage held the second-highest rank of *ason* 朝臣 in the Yamato court, and the Ōtomo lineage held the third-highest rank of *sukune* 宿禰.

京職藤原大夫贈大伴郎女歌三首[卿諱曰麻呂也]
Three poems sent by the Fujiwara Master of the Capital Offices to an Ōtomo lady (The minister's personal name was Maro).

嬬 嬬等之 珠篋有 (をとめらが たまくしげなる)
玉櫛乃 神 家武毛 (たまくしの かむさびけむも)
妹尓阿波受有者 (いもにあはずあれば)

Like beautiful combs in my maiden's treasured box
turn into antiques, I must have grown old as well,
since not having met my love.

好渡 人者年母 (よくわたる ひとはとしも)
有云乎 何時間曽毛 (ありといふを いつのまにそも)
吾戀尓来 (あがこひにける)

It is said that there are people who can endure
waiting even one year, but my longing became
unbearable before I noticed.

蒸被 奈胡也我下丹 (むしぶすま なごやがしたに)
雖臥 与妹不宿者 (ふせれども いもとしねねば)
肌之寒霜 (はだしさむしも)

Though I lie under soft, warm bedding made from
Ramie plant fibers, because I am not with my love,
even my skin is cold.

大伴郎女和歌四首
Four poems in response by the Ōtomo lady

狭穂河乃 小石踐渡 (さほがはの こいしふみわたり)
夜干玉之 黒馬之来夜者 (ぬばたまの くろのくるよは)
年尓母有粳 (としにもあらぬか)

The nights when my lord comes on a bead-black horse,
stepping over small stones to cross the Saho River—
can they not be every night?

千鳥鳴 佐保乃河瀬之 (ちどりなく さほのかはせの)
小浪 止時毛無 (さざれなみ やむときもなし)
吾戀者 (あがこふらくは)

Like the small ripples in the shoals of Saho River
where the plovers cry, there will never be a time
when my longing for you stops.

将来云毛 不来時有乎 (こむといふも こぬときあるを)
不来云乎 将来常者不待 (こじといふを こむとはまたじ)
不来云物乎 (こじといふものを)

Though there are times where you say you'll come but you don't,
I will not wait for you to come when you say you won't,
because you said you won't come.

千鳥鳴 佐保乃河門乃 (ちどりなく さほのかはとの)

Because the shoals are wide in the Saho River

瀬乎廣弥（せをひろみ）　打橋渡須（うちはしわたす）　where the plovers cry, I would lay down a wooden bridge
奈我来跡念者（ながくとおもへば）　if I thought you were coming.

右郎女者佐保大納言卿之女也　初嫁一品穂積皇子　被寵無儔而皇子薨之後時藤原麻呂　大夫娉之郎女焉　郎女家於坂上里　仍族氏号曰坂上郎女也
The lady [above] was the daughter of his lordship, the Saho Major Counselor. She was first married to Prince Hozumi of the First Rank. He was especially devoted to her, and after he passed away Lord Fujiwara no Maro courted the lady. Since the lady resided in the village of Sakanoue, her kinsmen called her the Lady of Sakanoue.[52]

Maro's compositions depict a man consumed with longing for a woman absent from his side. The first poem describes a figure that has begun to age in a similar manner as combs in a maiden's box turn into antiques due to not having met his love. The second poem evokes the Tanabata legend by using the motif of waiting to meet a lover once a year and, by introducing the figures of the cowherd and weaver girl, portrays the relationship between speaker and recipient as if they have already consummated their relationship. Finally, Maro's third poem describes the sense of emptiness the speaker has begun to feel in the absence of his beloved.

Sakanoue's first poem functions as a response to Maro's second poem, where the speaker also invokes the Tanabata legend by expressing a wish that her partner comes more than once a year. This poem also contains the striking image of a black horse crossing the Saho River in the dark of night. The second poem portrays a figure that describes her longing as something that never ceases, just as the ripples of the Saho River never do. Sakanoue's third poem shifts in tone, and is often described as a *zareuta* 戯れ歌 or limerick. The speaker declares that, because her beloved did not go to her when he said he would, she will not wait for him when he says he is not, and it appears the speaker's feelings toward her beloved have soured. The final poem sees

[52] MYS IV, Poems 522–28.

the speaker expressing a faint hope in her beloved as she says that, though she does not know if he will come to her or not, she will lay down a bridge for him anyway.

Within Sakanoue's four poems, there is considerable attention paid to the Saho River that was close to the Ōtomo clan's residence. This has the effect of grounding Maro and Sakanoue's poetic exchange in the real world, despite the fact it started in the world of the Tanabata legend and emphasizes Sakanoue's position within the Ōtomo residence. Sakanoue's four poems effectively ignore the Tanabata imagery set up in Maro's three. Moreover, Sakanoue insists throughout her poems that Maro must go to the Ōtomo residence in Saho rather than she go to the Fujiwara residence.

The commentarial tradition, including recent entries in Omodaka Hisataka's *Man'yōshū chūshaku* 萬葉集注釋 and Itō Haku's *Man'yōshū shakuchū* 万葉集釈注 tends to focus on this exchange's use of the poetic voices of the "visiting man" and a "waiting woman," as well as its connections to the Tanabata legend and a set of ancient songs recorded in Volume Thirteen of the *Man'yōshū*.[53] In this case, however, I want to consider the paratextual framework of the headnotes and endnotes that surround this exchange. The headnotes before Maro's poems include information about his name and his government position, and the endnotes after Sakanoue's contributions introduce the lady, her lineage, and details of her first marriage to Prince Hozumi, the fifth son of Emperor Tenmu who is remembered for his illicit relationship with his half-sister Princess Tajima.

[53] Omodaka Hisataka, *Man'yōshū chūshaku* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōrōnsha, 1957–1977), Itō Haku, *Man'yōshū shakuchū* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1995–2000).

What is unclear about the information presented is the connection between Sakanoue's first relationship with Hozumi and her poetic exchange with Maro. Tetsuno Masahiro has also pointed out this puzzling inclusion of a previous relationship in the exchange. He states:

> The description in the endnote [note to the left] at first glance seems to be excessive for the poems. The origins of [Sakanoue's] name and her being an object of Hozumi's affection are not directly related to her association with Maro or the contents of their exchange. Conversely, however, might it be that the inclusion of such a description also illuminates the meaning of the exchange between the lady and Maro?[54]

As Tetsuno notes, it is not obvious why or how this information is related to the poetic exchange with Maro, but there may indeed be a reason. If we consider the information found in the headnote and endnote as a framework for the exchange, is it possible to come up with a new understanding that departs from the standard interpretation of the exchange as depicting a "visiting man" and a "waiting woman?"

While it is likely that the purpose of the headnote and endnote is to provide details about the authors' personal histories, another meaning or function is also possible. Although there is no direct literary representation of Hozumi and Sakanoue's relationship vis-à-vis *sōmon* exchanges, this endnote that serves as an introduction for Sakanoue devotes significant space to describing their marriage. By including this information, the endnote signals to the reader that Sakanoue is someone who is suitable as a wife for the Fujiwara on a political level. Not only is she the daughter of Ōtomo no Yasumaro, who attained the rank of senior counselor during his lifetime,[55] but she was also beloved by Prince Hozumi, a member of the royal family. Therefore, she would

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[54] Tetsuno Masahiro, "Fujiwara no Maro to Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no zōtōka," *Nihon bungaku* 102, (Tōkyō: Tōkyō joshi daigaku, 2006), 2.
左注の記述は、一見、歌にとって余剰であるかのように思われる。呼称の由来や穂積皇子の寵愛を受けたことは、麻呂との交際や贈答の内容に直接関係しない。しかし逆に考えれば、こうした記述を伴うことが、実は郎女と麻呂の贈答の持った意味を照らし出していることにもなるのではないか。

[55] In the *ritsuryō* system, courtiers designated as "senior counselor" were of the fifth-highest rank in the court.

be very desirable as a marriage prospect for Maro, given the high-ranking positions of her male associates. This image of Sakanoue as a woman who held such a powerful political and social position is conveyed with just a few sentences in the endnote. However, through repeated references in the poems to the Saho River near her family's residence and the paratextual information about her position in her family, Sakanoue's poems make clear that she is not going anywhere, which is further supported by her eventual marriage to her half-brother, Sukunamaro. It is an indirect rejection of Maro's suit.

As a means by which to introduce Sakanoue in Volume IV, this poetic exchange with Maro not only shows hers and the Ōtomo family's relationship to the imperial family, but also the clan's relationship with the Fujiwara. Since there is a chronological issue in terms of overlap with Sakanoue's marriage to Sukunamaro, there has been much discussion about whether a romantic relationship existed between Maro and Sakanoue existed in reality and when it might have occurred.[56] The historicity of the relationship, however, is not the important question here. Rather, what we should think about instead is what kind of purpose the poetic exchange serves within the text of Volume IV. Within the wider context of the volume, this exchange suggests a social or political tension between the Fujiwara and Ōtomo clans. While the Fujiwara gained more political power over time, the Ōtomo had not only deep ties to the imperial family, but also possessed considerable poetic skills that could compete with (or even surpass) the Fujiwara. All of this is inscribed in both the poems and the headnote and endnote that encompass them.

If we consider the arrangement of Maro and Sakanoue's poems within the overall structure of Volume IV, we can see there is also another exchange between members of the Fujiwara and Ōtomo clan located at the end of the volume. It is an exchange between Sakanoue's

[56] Discussions can be found in commentaries such as Omodaka *Chūshaku* (1957–1977) and in articles such as Tetsuno (2006).

nephew, Yakamochi, and Fujiwara no Kusumaro, the son of Fujiwara no Nakamaro, who was a political foe of Yakamochi's ally Tachibana no Moroe. The reason for this exchange allegedly has to do with Kusumaro's intentions to marry Yakamochi's young daughter.

大伴宿祢家持報贈藤原朝臣久須麻呂歌三首
Three poems sent in reply to Fujiwara no asomi Kusumaro by Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi

春之雨者　弥布落尓　　Although the spring rains come down with more frequency,
梅花　未咲久　　The plum blossom has not yet begun to bloom.
伊等若美可聞　　Perhaps the bud is still young?

如夢　所念鴨　　How it seems to me as if it were out of a dream,
愛八師　君之使乃　　When a messenger from my beloved lord,
麻祢久通者　　Again and again comes to me!

浦若見　花咲難寸　　Tender and young still, its flowers hard to bloom,
梅乎殖而　人之事重三　　I planted this plum. Yet the thick words from others
念曽吾為類　　Have me vexed about what to do!

又家持贈藤原朝臣久須麻呂歌二首
Two more poems sent by Yakamochi to Fujiwara no ason Kusumaro

情八十一　所念可聞　　How uneasy and troubling these thoughts in my heart,
春霞　軽引時二　　When I receive news again and again during
事之通者　　A time when the spring mist flutters.

春風之　聲尓四出名者　　If the words come forth like the sound of a spring breeze,
有去而　不有今友　　Time passing as is, even if it is not now,
君之随意　　It will be as my lord wishes.

藤原朝臣久須麻呂来報歌二首
Two poems sent in reply by Fujiwara no ason Kusumaro

奥山之　磐影尓生流　　Like sedge roots growing in the shade of rocks atop

すがのねの　ねもころわれも 菅根乃　懃吾毛	The hidden mountains, do I not also feel
あひおもはざれや 不相念有哉	Such longing as you do?
はるさめを　まつとにしあらし 春雨乎　待常二師有四	It seems as though you are waiting for the spring rain.
わがやどの　わかきのうめも 吾屋戸之　若木乃梅毛	Here at my home too there is a young plum tree
いまだふふめり 未含有	That is yet budding still. [57]

Sakanoue and Yakamochi's poetic exchanges with Maro and Kusumaro respectively are not only exchanges between individuals, but also between the Ōtomo and Fujiwara clans. These *sōmon* exchanges, placed toward the beginning and at the end of Volume IV, suggest an intention to memorialize the relationship between the two clans through their inclusion in the anthology, but is that the sole purpose?

If we consider that the exchange between Yakamochi and Kusumaro is supposedly based on Kusumaro's marriage proposal to Yakamochi's daughter, then our understanding of Sakanoue's exchange with Maro changes as a result. Simply put, the context surrounding the exchange between Yakamochi and Kusumaro resembles the exchange between Sakanoue and Maro. As Maro seeks to build a relationship with the Ōtomo clan by marrying one of their high-ranking daughters, Kusumaro also seeks to strengthen the bonds between the clans by marrying the daughter of the current clan leader, Yakamochi. Since Yakamochi's daughter (alluded to as the "plum blossom" 梅花）is still young, Yakamochi has to decline Kusumaro's proposal.

Another arguably more severe reading of this exchange is possible if we consider the young age of Yakamochi's daughter not as a reason, but an *excuse* for him rejecting Kusumaro's suit. Yakamochi's figure within Volume Four, as suggested in the outline for the book's structure, is that initially of a young man engaged in dalliances with various women. This is

[57] MYS IV, Poems 786–92.

supported by the inclusion of poems addressed to Yakamochi from women who are either longing for him, dismayed over his lack of attention, or are angry at him for abandoning them, and his seeming disinterest as indicated by very few poems in response.[58] Over the course of the volume, however, we see him become more involved with his first-cousin, the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue. Similar to Sakanoue's abandonment of her courtship with Maro, Yakamochi is depicted as being more invested in the matters of the Ōtomo lineage. The tone of Yakamochi's poems suggests an attempt to placate his daughter's suitor, but the open-ended nature of the exchange's conclusion does not look promising for this potential union.

For this reason, if we return to Sakanoue and Maro's exchange, we can see a tension in the relationship between the Ōtomo and the Fujiwara present at the beginning of Volume IV, hidden within both the poems and the paratextual endnote as she insulates herself within the ancestral home and her family connections and spurs the advancements of an outsider. A similar behavior can be observed in the exchange between Yakamochi and Kusumaro as he delicately tries to halt the Fujiwara member's pursuit of his daughter. The lack of a resolution or happy union between the two clans result in an ambiguous ending to the volume, coming full circle as Yakamochi must deny another member of the Fujiwara. Thus, the poetic exchanges function as literary representations of the social and political tension with the Fujiwara and represent an attempt to alleviate that tension.

[58] The most egregious example is from Poems 587 to 612, where a woman named Lady Kasa sends twenty-four poems to Yakamochi (the last two from a separate occasion), and Yakamochi only sends *two* back.

An Invitation for a Tryst along the Saho River

Immediately following Sakanoue's exchange with Fujiwara no Maro is a composition in the rare poetic form known as *sedōka* 旋頭歌 ("head-repeating poem"). *Sedōka* are a variation on the tanka form, in a 5-7-7-5-7-7 syllabic pattern. There are roughly sixty-one examples of this form in the *Man'yōshū,* the majority of which are contained in sections that came from the "Kakinomoto no Hitomaro Collection" 柿本朝臣人麻呂歌集. Sakanoue's one *sedōka* contribution appears in Volume Four, numbered Poem 529:

> 又大伴坂上郎女歌一首
> *Also, a poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue*
>
> 佐保河乃　涯之官能　　Do not cut down the brush growing on the banks high
> 少歴木莫苅焉　　Above the Saho River!
> 在乍毛　張之来者　　Leave it be as is, for when springtime comes around
> 立隠金　　We will have a place to hide.

Generally speaking, *sedōka* poems were considered to be an old style of poetry, and believed to have been originally recited as a kind of dialogue.[59] Similar to *sōmon* poetry, *sedōka* as a poetic practice is considered to involve at least two participants. Poem 529 supports a type of interaction such as call-and-response, at least through imitation, as the speaker of this poem directly commands someone not to cut down the brush along the riverbanks. Several commentators have remarked upon Sakanoue's interest in imitating an old style of folk songs, whether for literary practice or as a form of diversion.[60] As noted by modern *tanka* poet Kubota Utsubo, the practice of meeting one's lover in tall grass was apparently not uncommon in ancient

[59] For a brief introduction to the poetic form of *sedōka*, see Kōnoshi Takamitsu, *Hikkei Man'yōshū o yomu tame no kiso hyakka.* Bessatsu Kokubungaku 55 (Tōkyō: Gakutōsha 2002), 162.

[60] For examples, see Omodaka 4, 138, and Kubota Utsubo, *Man'yōshū hyōshaku* 4 Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō (1943–1952), 82.

Japan, and was often a necessity if someone wanted to keep their meeting a secret.[61]

The tone of Poem 529 contrasts with the tone in the exchange with Maro as she demands he cross the river to get to her, rather than have a mutually agreed upon meeting among the brush. The likely reason for this is the context of the exchange versus the *sedōka*: one is in response to a formal invitation to court her while the other is a composition modeled after older "folk" songs describing a clandestine affair. The connection between Sakanoue's person and the Saho River is reinforced as the river is once again used as the setting for the *sedōka*. As Sakanoue's father Ōtomo no Yasumaro is often referred to as the "Saho Senior Counselor" 佐保大納言 in the *Man'yōshū*[62] and we learn from other paratextual information that there was an Ōtomo residence in Saho, there is a strong tie between the lineage and region. Kageyama Hisayuki sees parallels between the Saho river's depiction in Sakanoue's poem and that of rivers and high places in other examples of *sedōka* that are designated as sacred ground, and therefore Saho becomes sacred as well by association.[63] While agreeing with Kageyama on the idea of the Saho River as sacred, Asano Noriko also points out the significance of the river's location in the capital of Heijōkyō.[64] For a high-ranking noblewoman such as Sakanoue, a river that runs through the capital is a suitable place for a tryst with a lover. In using the poetic form of the *sedōka*, which is associated with the countryside, this poem creates a pastoral image of the river and the woman. It also continues the general imagery established from Maro's first few poems

[61] Kubota (1943), 82.

[62] Besides the endnote to Sakanoue's exchange with Fujiwara no Maro (see above), other examples include endnotes to Poem 126 in Volume II, and Poem 518 and 532 in Volume IV.

[63] Kageyama Hisayuki, "Sakanoue no Iratsume no sedōka isshu." *Sonoda gobun* 5, 4-14. Amagasaki, Japan: Sonoda Women's University, 1990. 11-12.

[64] Asano Noriko. *Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no kenkyū.* Tōkyō: Kanrin Shobō (1994), 174.

that reference the Tanabata legend, creating a strong connection between Poem 529 and the exchange that precedes it.

What stands out in this poem in terms of its paratextual elements, however, is the use of the character *mata* 又 in the headnote. Translated here as "more," it can also mean "once again," or "in addition." The presence of this character coupled with Poem 529 coming in sequence directly after Sakanoue's exchange with Maro has led many commentators and scholars to speculate whether this poem was sent to Maro along with or after the initial exchange. Scholars such as Kageyama and Onodera Seiko believe that to be the case, with Kageyama concluding that this poem was composed shortly after Maro began courting Sakanoue.[65] Likewise, Onodera mentions that, while Poem 529's use of the character *mata* is different from the character's use in other exchanges such as Yakamochi's additional two poems sent to Kusumaro (referenced above) in that it does not have accompanying characters such as *okuru* 贈 ("to give") or *kotaeru* 和 ("to answer"), because the use of *mata* in the headnote comes after the Maro sequence, it is possible to consider the poem as meant for Maro.[66] This is a clear case where the order of poems in the anthology has influenced readers' understanding of the poem's context, where interpretations sometimes hinge on the meaning of a single character.

[65] Kageyama 13. "…This poem was produced during the earliest stages of Maro and Sakanoue's love affair, that is, shortly after Maro asked after Sakanoue. Rather than being straightforward, [this poem] is nothing short of brilliant as it emulates the form of folk songs while skillfully blending an intention to refuse with an intention to seduce." …当歌は郎女と麻呂との恋愛の初期段階、つまり麻呂が郎女を娉うて程ないころに制作されたものということになろう。ストレートにそれを表わすのでなく、民謡の形式に倣いつつ、拒絶の意志と誘惑の意志をたくみに交錯させたあたり、みごとと言うほかあるまい。

[66] Onodera Seiko. *Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume.* Tokyo: Kanrin shobō, 1993. 40.

Omodaka's understanding of the character *mata* in the headnote does not go as far to say it was a poem sent to Maro, but he also thinks it to have been composed around the same time. In his commentary on the poem, he writes:

> Because the author of this poem is the same as the author of the previous section, the character *mata* is written here. While this does not mean that the poem was given to the same person, it seems it was written around the same time. Even if there was no endnote [note to the left] to the previous compositions, the term *mata* acknowledges that Lady Sakanoue is the author of those poems. [67]

In other words, the character *mata* is meant to indicate that the author of this poem is the same as the one in the previous sequence, in the anthology, not that she sent a poem once more to the same person. In addition, the character confirms that the author of the poems sent to Maro, which notably in the headnote is only named as "an Ōtomo lady," 大伴郎女 is indeed Sakanoue. Without the endnote of the previous set of poems and the headnote for Poem 529, readers would not be able to identify Sakanoue as the author of the replies sent to Maro, which are likely her earliest works compiled into the *Man'yōshū.*

The reason why this is significant is because it is a clear instance where the framework of an anthology has a direct hand in "creating" the author. In the case of Sakanoue's exchange with Maro and the *sedōka* that immediately follows after, the combined paratextual information creates an enclosed loop, structured in the following manner:

> Headnote for Poems 522–24: Fujiwara no Maro writes a poem to an Ōtomo lady
> ↓
> Headnote for Poems 525–28: The Ōtomo lady responds
> ↓
> Endnote for Poem 525–28: Revelation of the Ōtomo lady's name ("Lady Sakanoue")
> ↓

[67] Omodaka 4, 136.
前の作者と同じであるから「又」と書いたもので、同じ人に贈ったといふ意味では無いと思はれるが、同じ頃のものと思はれる。前の作の左注が無くても、「又」の語により前の作が坂上郎女である事が認められるわけである。

> Headnote for Poem 529: One more poem from Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue, the Ōtomo lady mentioned in the earlier headnotes

Coupled with a shared setting of the Saho River between Sakanoue's responses and the *sedōka* along with the placement of poems side-by-side and general understanding of both *sōmon* and *sedōka* as literary practices involving multiple participants, naturally one might assume that the *sedōka* is about Maro and Sakanoue's affair. As Omodaka points out, however, just because the *author* of Poems 525–28 and Poem 529 is the same person does not mean that her *audience* is in both instances.

While picking up on the deliberate framing of Poems 522 through 528 and Poem 529 as a distinct sequence in Volume IV, previous scholarship assumes that the subject of this section is Maro and Sakanoue's relationship. I would argue, on the other hand, that this framing is not for the purpose of portraying their love affair so much as it is for introducing one of Volume IV's most significant figures first as a romantic heroine. Through the combined main body of the text and the surrounding headnotes and endnotes, this first iteration of Sakanoue is a depiction of a young noblewoman from the capital who is full of both literary and political promise. In the exchange with Maro, she is portrayed as the daughter of a high-ranking minister and beloved by a now deceased imperial prince, who challenges a suitor to be her match by demanding he come visit her at her family's residence. The image of Sakanoue as a playful yet determined young woman continues in Poem 529 as the speaker tries to encourage a would-be lover to meet her on the riverbank near her home. Though it is impossible to determine Poem 529's historical context and whether it was intended to be sent to Maro or was a song recited at a social event such as banquet, within the body of Volume IV, the *sedōka* works in tandem with the preceding poetic exchange in order to give the reader an initial impression of Sakanoue that will gradually change over the course of the volume.

Poetic Games with Kinsmen I: Ōtomo no Momoyo

The next set of poems attributed to Sakanoue are a part of a subsection in Volume Four focused on poetry composed in Dazaifu, including works from Tabito, Sakanoue's elder half-brother, and a fellow kinsman named Momoyo 大伴百代 (dates unknown). Momoyo's exact ancestry is difficult to confirm. Based on information from one source, he might have been the son of Ōtomo no Ushikai 大伴牛養 (d. 749), making him a distant cousin of Sakanoue.[68] According to the headnote for the following poems, Momoyo was the Senior Secretary of Dazaifu 大宰大監, the third highest ranking position in the regional government. Composed on the topic of longing 戀 (*koi*), these poems depict an older man seemingly being tortured by his love for a woman who will not see him:

大宰大監大伴宿祢百代戀歌四首
Four Poems on Longing by Senior Secretary of Dazaifu, Ōtomo no sukune Momoyo

事毛無　生来之物乎 (こともなく　いきこしものを)	Up until now I have safely lived without
老奈美尓　如是戀乎毛 (おいなみに　かかるこひにも)	Any bitter thoughts, only in my old age to meet
吾者遇流香聞 (あれはあへるかも)	With a longing such as this!
孤悲死牟　時者何為牟 (こひしなむ　ときはなにせむ)	What good will it do after I die in longing?
生日之　為社妹乎 (いけるひの　ためこそいもを)	It is for the days in which I am still living
欲見為礼 (みまくほりすれ)	That I wish to see Little Sister
不念乎　思常云者 (おもはぬを　おもふといはば)	If I lie and speak of longing where there is none,
大野有　三笠社之 (おほのなる　みかさのもりの)	The god of the Mikasa forest shrine in Ōno
神思知三 (かみししらさむ)	Will surely know of it.

[68] The source in question is genealogist Suzuki Matoshi's *Hyakka keizu* 『百家系図』(1871). There is no description of Momoyo's ancestry in either the *Man'yōshū* or the *Shoku Nihongi* (completed 797). For a visualization of the Ōtomo family tree, see Appendix A: Ōtomo Lineage on page 215.

無暇　人之眉根乎　　Even though she makes people scratch their eyebrows[69]
徒　令掻乍　　Without rest in the vain hopes of meeting her,
不相妹可聞　　Little Sister will not meet with them![70]

Two poems by Sakanoue immediately come after the set of four poems by Momoyo. The first describes an older woman who has encountered a new depth of longing she had never experienced before. The second is a a more playful jab at a man who appears to be seeing someone else even though there are rumors about the two of them being together:

大伴坂上郎女歌二首
Two poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

黒髪二　白髪交　　Until I'd grown old, and white strands have mingled with
至耆　如是有戀庭　　These black locks on my head, I had not yet met with
未相尓　　Longing for someone like this.

山菅之　實不成事乎　　Like a mountain sedge which bears no actual fruit,
吾尓所依　言礼師君者　　Though it is said that my lord is connected to me,
与孰可宿良牟　　With whom indeed *are* you sleeping?[71]

As Momoyo and Sakanoue's poems are recorded sequentially in a volume that is comprised in large part of correspondences between men and women, many scholars consider Sakanoue's poems as a response to Momoyo's, possibly during a clan banquet.[72] In addition, Sakanoue's first poem is from the perspective of an older woman who, like Momoyo's older man described

[69] It was believed at the time that if someone scratched their eyebrows, their lover would visit them.

[70] MYS IV, Poems 559–562.

[71] MYS IV, Poems 563–564.

[72] Inoguchi Fumi, "Onnauta no bi—Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no kotoba," *Bi no Man'yōshū*, Tokyo: Kasama shoin (2012), 132. Onodera (1993), 45.

in his first poem, also encounters new feelings of longing. As the speakers in both poems share a similar position, one could interpret these poems as communicating with one another.

Yet there is no *direct* repetition of imagery from Momoyo's poems in Sakanoue's poems, such as white hairs intermingling with the black, or the god of the Mikasa forest shrine. It is merely the narrators' observation that they have not experienced such an intense longing until now that binds these two sequences. When we examine the contents of Momoyo's and Sakanoue's poems together, the connection between them is tenuous at best. Rather, it would seem these poems were grouped together because either they were composed around the same time (when both Momoyo and Sakanoue were in Dazaifu) or because they share similar themes.

In addition, Momoyo and Sakanoue's supposed exchange stands out in comparison with exchanges recorded in Volume Four between Sakanoue and other kinsmen, namely Ōtomo no Surugamaro and Abe no Mushimaro. In each of these cases, the first set of poems exchanged between Sakanoue and these men include endnotes detailing the circumstances behind the correspondence as well as a description of how they are related:

> 右坂上郎女者佐保大納言卿之女也　駿河麻呂此高市大卿之孫也　兩卿兄弟之家女孫姑姪之族　是以題歌送答相問起居
> *[The above] Lady Sakanoue was the daughter of his lordship, the Major Counselor of Saho. Surugamaro was the grandson of the Great Lord of Takechi. As the two lords were brothers, the daughter and grandson were related as aunt and nephew. Because of this, they exchanged poems on this theme and inquired after each other's well-being.*[73]
>
> 右大伴坂上郎女之母石川内命婦与安陪朝臣蟲満之母安曇外命婦同居姉妹同氣之親焉　縁此郎女蟲満相見不踈相談既密　聊作戯歌以為問答也
> *[The above] Lady Sakanoue's mother, Lady Ishikawa of the Inner Palace, and Abe no asomi Mushimaro's mother, Lady Azumi of the Outer Palace, were sisters who lived together and were close relatives of similar mind. Because of this, the Lady and Mushimaro were not distant in how they looked at each other and had already been initimate in their conversations. Through composing limericks* [zareuta] *with some effort, they created a*

[73] Endnote to MYS IV, Poems 646–649.

dialogue [with each other].[74]

The exchanges with Surugamaro and Mushimaro, along with the exchange with Fujiwara no Maro, establish a pattern in terms of how Sakanoue's direct exchanges with men are represented in Volume IV.[75] The supposed exchange between Momoyo and Sakanoue does not follow this pattern. In addition, Momoyo's sequence is classified as being on a certain topic ("longing"), whereas Sakanoue's two poems are not categorized under any topic. Therefore, it is likely that Sakanoue's poems are *not* in direct response to Momoyo's or were not composed within the same setting. Furthermore, as Iwashita Hitoshi points out in his survey of banquet poetry in the *Man'yōshū,* traditionally it is women who start the exchange of poetry at a banquet, and men who then respond in turn, as opposed to *sōmon* exchanges where the man initiates the correspondence.[76] While Momoyo and Sakanoue's poems exhibit a level of playfulness seen in other banquet poems, the fact that they do not follow the general pattern of how banquet poetry is represented in the *Man'yōshū* makes the argument for interpreting them together even weaker.

Nevertheless, the fact that both sequences begin with a depiction of an elderly nobleman or woman encountering new feelings is as good a reason as any for the compiler to place the poems side-by-side in this book. If we consider this, we must then ask what kind of effect this has on readers. One obvious result is that readers in both Japanese and English have considered these poems to be another example recorded in the *Man'yōshū* of the poetic games that Sakanoue and her male relatives played together because, as Onodera points out, poems such as the ones

[74] Endnote to MYS IV, Poems 665–667.

[75] While there are several poems sent to the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue, the Elder Daughter's responses are not included. Therefore, we can consider these poems to not be under the same category as the exchanges with Maro, Surugamaro, and Mushimaro.

[76] Iwashita Hitoshi. "*Man'yōshū* ni okeru enseki uta no ichi kōsatsu." *Mejiro daigaku jinbungaku kenkyū* Vol. 10 (2014), 4-5.

above can be regarded as a form of greeting or literary game.[77] What has often happened, however, is that some Anglophone scholars ask questions about potential incestuous undertones in poetry exchanged between members of the Ōtomo lineage.[78] This is somewhat understandable given the family engaged in half-sibling and first cousin marriages in the eighth century, as Sakanoue married her half-brother Sukunamaro and married her eldest daughter to her nephew, Yakamochi. This quandary, however, reveals two issues surrounding previous interpretations of Sakanoue's work, especially in Volume IV. First is the assumption that her poetry was inherently amorous on some level, based on her position as a woman along with conventional thinking that "women's songs" are love poetry. Second is that Sakanoue's proximity to any male poet from her lineage within the text means that her poems are directly related to theirs, regardless if there is information to be found in either text or paratext to support such an idea.

The following interpretation can be made, however, in light of the information provided by Volume IV's structure as well as its headnotes and endnotes: when we last saw a contribution from Sakanoue in the exchange with Fujiwara no Maro and the *sedōka*, the paratextual information along with the contents of the poems themselves constructed the figure of a young romantic heroine located in the capital by the Saho River. Now, by placing Sakanoue's two poems next to Momoyo's, she reappears as an older woman of similar standing to Momoyo's narrator, who has also experienced highs and lows in relationships. Though the figure described is still able to be surprised by new levels of intensity in longing, the poet's playfulness still

[77] Onodera (1993), 46.

[78] One example would be Edwin Cranston's description of Sakanoue in his anthology of translations: "Depending on whether we read the sexual passion in her poems as the imprint of actual experiences or as something else—an arch game of poetic badinage, training in amatory *ars poetica* for her kinsmen—she may seem like the queen tree in a garden of ancient incest, or like the chief mother-poet of her tribe." Cranston (1993), 420–21.

comes through in the second poem, where she pointedly asks her faux lover about who is actually in his bed.

In addition, the placement of Sakanoue's poems in proximity to poems from other kinsmen stationed in Dazaifu such as Momoyo implies that Sakanoue herself had moved there. Information found in the headnote for Poem 963 in Book VI, composed by Sakanoue, provides direct evidence for the theory that she moved down to Kyūshū during Tabito's tenure as governor of the military stronghold 大宰府帥.[79] This information can only be inferred in Volume IV, however, by considering the placement of Sakanoue's poems and to whom her works are placed side-by-side. In observing this, it becomes possible to see Sakanoue's close proximity to the leadership of the Ōtomo lineage and how she eventually becomes involved both directly and indirectly in the personal affairs of multiple members.

Ghost-Writing Courtships within the Family

Shortly after the section with Momoyo, there is another sequence portraying relationships between members of the Ōtomo lineage, the first being the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue's replies to Yakamochi, and the second a poem sent to the Elder Daughter of Tamura 大伴田村大娘 (dates unknown) by Sakanoue's younger brother, Ōtomo no Inakimi 大伴稲公 (dates unknown) A poem composed by Sakanoue is inserted inbetween these two exchanges, seemingly at random:

> 大伴坂上家之大娘報贈大伴宿祢家持歌四首
> *Four poems sent in reply by the Elder Daughter of Ōtomo no Sakanoue to Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi*

[79] Headnote to MYS VI Poem 963: *In Winter, the eleventh month, Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue composed a poem when she departed from the Governor of Dazaifu's house, went up the road, and climbed the mountain called Nago in the Munakata Province of Chikuzen.* 冬十一月大伴坂上郎女發帥家上道超筑前國宗形部名々兒山之時作歌一首

生而有者　見巻毛不知　Though I don't know if I will see you while alive,
何如毛　将死与妹常　Why, then, did I see you in my dreams saying,
夢所見鶴　"I will die, Little Sister!"

大夫毛　如此戀家流乎　This sort of longing from a valiant man,
幼婦之　戀情尓　Is it anything compared to the longing heart
比 有目八方　Of a delicate maiden?

月草之　徙 安久　Is it because his heart moves on so easily
念 可母　我 念 人之　Like the dayflower's dye? Not even a word comes
事毛告不来　From the man for whom I long.

春日山　朝立雲之　Just as there is no day without clouds rising
不居日無　見巻之欲寸　In the morning atop Mount Kasuga, I wish
君毛有鴨　To see my lord always![80]

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

出而将去　時之波将有乎　There always will be a time when my lord departs.
故　妻戀為乍　But why now, while in yearning for your wife,
立而可去哉　Must you rise up to take leave?[81]

大伴宿祢稲公贈田村大娘歌一首　大伴宿奈麻呂卿之女也
A poem sent to the Elder Daughter of Tamura by Ōtomo no sukune Inakimi
She was the daughter of Lord Ōtomo no Sukunamaro

不相見者　不戀有益乎　If we did not meet, there would be no such longing.
妹乎見而　本名如此耳　What is there to do? When seeing Little Sister,
戀者奈何将為　I can only long in vain.

右一首姉坂上郎女作
The one poem [above] was composed by [his] elder sister, Lady Sakanoue.[82]

[80] MYS IV, Poems 581–84.

[81] MYS IV, Poem 585.

[82] MYS IV, Poem 586.

Though Sakanoue has just one poem attributed to her in this section, her presence is strong throughout the other poems surrounding it. It is as if she is facillitating relationships between the younger members of her family by authoring their poetic exchanges. For one, Poems 581 through 584, the set of poems attributed to the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue in response to Yakamochi's (which are not recorded) are speculated to have been written by Sakanoue herself. Composed around 732 according to information in other paratextual elements, the Elder Daughter would have been around twelve-years old around the time these were composed, and Yakamochi not much older at fourteen. This has led scholars, including Itō Haku, to conclude that these four poems are "without a doubt" (に違いない) ghost-written by Sakanoue as they do not sound as if they were written by a young woman.[83]

Statements such as the above imply that the image of a *tawayame* 幼婦 ("delicate maiden") used in describing the subject of Poem 582, and implied as the subject position in the rest of the poems, are at odds with the position of its presumed author. While the author might be an older woman, the persona illustrated in Poems 581 through 584 adopts the feminine gendered position of a young wife confronting her lover, who is also fashioned as the masculine archetype of the *masurao* 大夫, or "valiant man." As the poem's subject speaks from such a position, it likely necessitates that the author of the poem, whether she is its "true" author or not, must also be a young woman as well. The designation of authorship here, then, does not necessarily point to an actual person. Rather, it assigns authorship to a name in order to narrativize them, or make

[83] Itō Haku. *Man'yōshū shakuchū*, Vol. 2 (1996), 500–1.

them into a literary protagonist of sorts.[84] Whether the Elder Daughter wrote these poems herself is inconsequential as the structure of the text and the contents of the poems necessitate that she be their author in order to position her as Yakamochi's primary love interest for whom he is destined. It also constructs the story of her relationship with Yakamochi which, as Itō observes, becomes a major focal point in the second half of Volume IV.[85]

Based on the theory that Lady Sakanoue is the true author behind the Elder Daughter's poems, the meaning of the last two poems has been contested by scholars as well. There are two opposing interpretations of the phrase *utsoroi yasuku omoekamo* 移ろひ易く思へかも, (translated here as "is it because [his heart] moves so easily?") where it is either Yakamochi or the Elder Daughter being described as having a fickle heart. The first one, according to Hashimoto Tatsuo, is a conventional interpretation of the line, likely because in poems such as these the man is usually accused of being unfaithful, whereas the second is a more novel interpretation that supports the theory that these poems were composed by Sakanoue instead.[86] While the second interpretation is tantilizing, as there are not many poems that accuse a woman of fickleness, based on the content found in the rest of the poems written by the Elder Daughter and Sakanoue in Volume IV, especially where Sakanoue invokes the image of the *tawayame*, it is best ot take the more conventional approach in interpreting this poem, at least for now.

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[84] Torquil Duthie also describes the uses of the author function in order to create literary protagonists in the text, specifically as it relates to Kakinomoto no Hitomaro and his autobiographical works. See Duthie, "Literary Authorship in Early Japan," (forthcoming), 15.

[85] Itō specifically states that the second half is dedicated to the romantic adventures of Yakamochi's youth 家持青春の恋物語 Itō (1996) 2, 502.

[86] See Hashimoto Tatsuo, "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Daijō no Uta" in *Seminaa Man'yō no kajin to sakuhin* 10 (2004), 158, for a full breakdown of interpretations. Specifically, Omodaka Hisataka interprets the line as chastising Yakamochi for his fickle heart, whereas scholars such as Takeda Yūkichi and Itō Haku interpret it as the Elder Daughter being unfaithful.

What follows this sequence is a lone poem from Sakanoue reprimanding the recipient for leaving even though he is longing for his wife. Given its proximity to the Elder Daughter's set, this suggests that in Poem 585 is not written from the position of Sakanoue scolding a lover, but rather her nephew for abandoning his wife. Poem 585 can also be used as evidence to support the aforementioned interpretation of Poems 583 and 584. Right after the Elder Daughter scolds Yakamochi, her mother does the same. In following after the Elder Daughter's sequence, this poem is framed so as to depict the relationship between these three characters at this stage in Volume IV. The Elder Daughter is waiting for an absent Yakamochi to commit to her, and Sakanoue supports her by scolding Yakamochi for his behavior. Thus truly begins Sakanoue's role in Volume IV as the manager of personal affairs within the Ōtomo lineage.

Poem 585's position also functions as a focal point connecting two courtships represented before and after, that being between Yakamochi and the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue, and between Inakimi and the Elder Daughter of Tamura. Poem 586 is noteworthy in that it one of the clear examples of a *daisaku* 代作, or ghost-written poem. The paratextual elements surrounding the poem conflict with one another, as the headnote classifies the author as Sakanoue's younger brother, Ōtomo no Inakimi, while the endnote the endnote states that the poem was composed by Lady Sakanoue, his elder sister. The figure as described in the poem is that of a man, and perhaps a *masurao*, longing in vain for a woman he cannot meet. It is a typical type of *sōmon* poem coming from a male author written in a conventional masculine persona, hence the initial designation of authorship to Inakimi. Yet, the endnote reveals the "true" author of the poem, a woman. Poem 586, therefore, is striking not for its poetic contents, but in the evidence it provides. Namely, women could (and likely did) write poems adopting a traditional masculine

persona in the Nara period. In addition, a woman could be given credit for her authorship of a poem that does not match her gender, just as a man might.

This revelation, however, leads to another question: why is authorship attributed to the Elder Daughter in Poems 581 through 584 (if we assume Sakanoue was the real author), but not Inakimi in Poem 586? It likely has to do in part with the poetic mode utilized, as *sōmon* poetry is clearly associated with women throughout the *Man'yōshū*. However, the function of the paratexts surrounding these poems also cannot be ignored. In assigning authorship to the Elder Daughter, the headnote to Poems 581 through 584 help to establish the beginnings of the narrative of Yakamochi and the Elder Daughter's courtship. If Yakamochi is a romantic protagonist, it becomes necessary that his love interest matches him on a literary level, hence why the Elder Daughter's status as author is not taken from her. Poem 585 then functions not only as establishing Sakanoue's role as mediator between Yakamochi and her daughter, but also possibly as a hint to the true author of the previous sequence. Attributing authorship to Inakimi in the headnote of Poem 586, only to give it to Sakanoue in the endnote makes clear which person to whom the editor (likely Yakamochi) wanted to give credit. The inclusion of a poem representing Inakimi's courtship of the Elder Daughter of Tamura implies its importance on a social level, but the poem is included to showcase Sakanoue's literary and social prowess instead of Inakimi's. It is she who gains the cultural prestige associated with poetic composition.

"Song of Resentment" as Template for Women Scorned

After establishing Sakanoue's position as influential within her family and as a major poet in the mode of *sōmon* poetry, Sakanoue's next entry in the volume arguably becomes the

template on which others will be based and to which they will refer.[87] Poems 619 and 620, also known as the "Song on Resentment" 怨恨歌, is a *chōka* and *hanka* set, and the first of Sakanoue's recorded in Volume Four. *Hanka*, translated frequently into English as "envoy," refers to an unspecified number of *tanka* poetry that accompany a longer *chōka* verse. Their contents are generally included in interpretations of the entire poem, and in the case of the following sequence, the *hanka* repeats and reinforces the main sentiment of the *chōka*—the bitterness its speaker feels after realizing she has been deceived by an unreliable man. The poem is as follows:

大伴坂上郎女怨恨歌一首〈并短歌〉
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue on resentment (*with* tanka)

押照　難波乃菅之 (おしてる　なには　のすげの)	Close-rooted like sedge that grows in far-shining Naniwa
根毛許呂尓　君之聞四手 (ねむころに　きみがきこして)	With kind, tender words my lord spoke, and because
年深　長四云者 (としふかく　ながくしいへば)	He said, "The years pass, but my love will never change,"
真十鏡　磨師情乎 (まそかがみ　とぎしこころを)	My feelings, which were polished like a clear mirror,
縦手師　其日之極 (ゆるしてし　そのひのきはみ)	Were admitted then, and from that day thereafter,
浪之共　靡珠藻乃 (なみのむた　なびくたまもの)	Unlike the seaweed that flutters here and there,
云々　意者不持 (かにかくに　こころはもたず)	Carried along waves, I held a heart free of worry.
大船乃　憑有時丹 (おほぶねの　たのめるときに)	When I relied on him to visit, as does a great ship,
千磐破　神哉将離 (ちはやぶる　かみかさけけむ)	The powerful gods, did they perhaps keep us apart?
空蝉乃　人歟禁良武 (うつせみの　ひとかさふらむ)	The people of this world, did they perhaps forbid it?
通為　君毛不来座 (かよはしし　きみもきまさず)	Though he used to pass by, my lord did not come to me.
玉梓之　使母不所見 (たまづさの　つかひもみえず)	Because there was not a messenger to be seen,
成奴礼婆　痛毛為便無三 (なりぬれば　いたもすべなみ)	Letter in his hand, there is nothing to be done.

[87] Ueno Makoto argues this for one of Surugamaro's poems sent to Sakanoue. See Ueno, "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume to Ōtomo no Surugamaro no zōtōka—'urami' o meguru hyōgen no tokusei to naijitsu to." Man'yō kodai kenkyūsho nenpō 5 (2007): 27–55.

ぬばたまの　よるはすがらに 夜干玉乃　夜者須我良尓	Even though, through nights dark as pitch-black jewels
あからひく　ひもくるるまで 赤羅引　日母至闇	Until the day's end brightly glowing red,
なげけども　しるしをなみ 雖嘆　知師乎無三	Though I weep and grieve, it has no effect at all.
おもへども　たづきをしらに 雖念　田付乎白二	Though I long for him, since there's nothing I can do,
たわやめと　いはくもしるく 幼婦常　言雲知久	A weak young maiden is indeed what I am called.
たわらはの　ねのみなきつつ 手小童之　哭耳泣管	And, like a child who does nothing but cry while
たもとほり　きみがつかひを 俳徊　君之使乎	Wandering aimlessly, though I wait for his messenger,
まちやかねてむ 待八兼手六	Is there any worth in waiting?

反歌
Envoy

はじめより　ながくいひつつ 従元　長謂管	Though from the start he said his love was lasting,
たのめずは　かかるおもひに 不令恃者　如是念二	If I had not relied on him, would I perhaps not have met
あはましものか 相益物歟	With bitter feelings such as this?

The situation illustrated in this *chōka* and *hanka* is a trope found in the so-called *onna-uta* genre, which is defined as poetry composed in the voice of a woman expressing resentment toward her male lover.[88] Some Japanese scholars have also noted this poem's resemblance to the "Song of Resentment," composed by Six Dynasties poet Ban Jieyu 班婕妤, and that it might have likely been a reference for a poet such as Sakanoue.[89] The inclusion of this poem thus positions Sakanoue as part of a literary tradition that originated in Sinitic texts and then was transmitted to Japan. This would later become a convention in what would be defined by scholars as "women's

[88] Suzuki Hideo, "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume – Onna-uta no honshitsu." In *Man'yō no josei kajin* (Ed. Ono Hiroshi. Tōkyō: Kasama Shoin, 2009), 29–30.

[89] Ōhama Masaki and Inoguchi Fumi, "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume ron," *Seminā Man'yō no kajin to sakuhin,* vol. 10 (2004), 24. See Chang, Kang-i Sun et. al., ed. *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 18–20, for a translation of Ban Jieyu's poem.

songs" that centered on the figure of the neglected woman. Sakanoue's version is one of the longest (if not the longest) examples written in this poetic mode in early Japanese poetry. It is also filled with a number of *makurakotoba*, such as *oshiteru Naniwa* 押照難波 ("far-shining Naniwa"), *masokagami togishi kokoro* 真十鏡磨師情 ("feelings polished as a clear mirror"), and *nubatama no yoru* 夜干玉乃夜 ("night pitch-black as jewels"). In other words, Sakanoue's Song of Resentment contains both Sinitic and Japanese poetic tropes and techniques, showcasing her prowess at poetic composition.

The speaker's description of herself as a *tawayame*, translated here as "weak young maiden," differs from other inscriptions of the word in the *Man'yōshū*, which often use the characters for "hand," "weak," and "woman" (手弱女). Poem 619 notably uses the character for "young" or "child" instead, repeating the characters used in Poem 582 by the Elder Daughter. The use of these characters implies that the speaker is young or has been reduced to feeling as if she were a child due to her naïve, misplaced trust in another's promises. The *hanka* emphasizes this point further by reiterating the sentiment that she would not be suffering if she had not relied on someone else. Sakanoue's narrator appears critical of her *own* actions, though, rather than blaming the intended target of her resentment. It is as if she is stating, "look at how foolish I was to believe in you," rather than "you are terrible for doing this to me."

Much scholarship has been devoted to uncovering the identity of the man causing Sakanoue all this distress. To summarize, the main suspects are Ōtomo no Sukunamaro, the father of her two daughters, Fujiwara no Maro, with whom she exchanged poems mentioned earlier in the chapter, fellow kinsman Ōtomo no Surugamaro, and her nephew Yakamochi.[90] The assumption in all of these efforts, however, is that the Song of Resentment is based on her

[90] Ōmori Akihisa. "Sakanoue no Iratsume no urami uta." *Seminā Man'yō no kajin to sakuhin,* vol. 10 (2004), 69.

personal life, that Poems 619 and 620 point to historical figures. Given that the poem is collected in a volume dedicated to *sōmon* exchanges, it is probable that this poem was sent to another person. However, this is not something the reader can ever truly know, as the paratextual elements do no reveal a name. The editor, in all likelihood, did not deem this information important enough to transmit to the audience. Rather, it is more apt to say that Sakanoue is adopting a poetic voice that is useful for conveying displeasure at a particular situation.

Instead, it is best to at other poems in the surrounding text, as an interesting pattern emerges. Sakanoue's "Song on Resentment" follows after a sequence of poems by women addressed to Yakamochi, expressing passion and bitterness at being left alone in their longing. These include an uninterrupted sequence of twenty-four poems by Lady Kasa, to which only two poems in response by Yakamochi are recorded, hinting at regret for even starting the relationship.[91] After poems from Princess Yamaguchi and Lady Ōmiwa, which receive no response at all, Sakanoue's sequence on bitterness and longing appears next. While the setting of the poem is specific in its description of the speaker standing on or being close by the shores of Naniwa Bay, in adopting the conventional persona of the "waiting woman," this poetic sequence serves as a summation of the frustration and anger expressed in the previous poems, as if the figure depicted in Sakanoue's poem becomes the embodiment of all their frustration. Furthermore, the repetition of the characters used for *tawayame* evokes the image of a young woman instead of someone old enough to be a mother. This implies that the speaker adopts a position that identifies with the Elder Daughter, perhaps. Therefore, if there is anyone that the Song of Resentment is supposed to "address" within the text, it is likely Yakamochi, our

[91] See MYS IV, Poems 587–612. For an English translation, see Cranston (1993), 566–74.

romantic hero who has spent much of his youth dallying with various women.[92] In a way, Poems 619 and 620 mark a turning point in both Sakanoue and Yakamochi's arcs within Volume IV. As Yakamochi the protagonist begins to grow older and mature, Sakanoue takes a step back as romantic heroine and leans more into her role as clan matriarch.

Poetic Games with Kinsmen II: Ōtomo no Surugamaro

After her longest entry in Volume Four, Sakanoue does not appear again until an exchange with another kinsman named Ōtomo no Surugamaro 大伴駿河麻呂 (d. 776). Surugamaro's exact lineage is unknown, as the endnote to an exchange with Sakanoue in Volume Four implies he is the grandson of Ōtomo no Miyuki 大伴御行 (646?–701),[93] but in a family tree for the Tomo 伴 lineage, he is listed as Ōtomo no Michitari's son.[94] Surugamaro's political career from what is known in the *Shoku Nihongi* appears to have been somewhat tumultuous. While he was made the governor of Echizen in 746, because he was implicated along with two other Ōtomo kinsmen in the Tachibana no Naramaro Rebellion 橘奈良麻呂の乱 of 757, his political career stalled for several years after.[95] Surugamaro rose to the rank of state councilor 参議 (*sangi*) the same year as his death and achieved Junior Third Rank

[92] For another argument in favor of Yakamochi, see Hashimoto Tatsuo (1974), 6.

[93] See previous translation on page 30 or the poetic sequence following on page 44. Miyuki was the older brother of Yasumaro, Tabito and Sakanoue's father, and also served in the Jinshin War of 672. After his death in 701, he was honored for his service by receiving the posthumous rank of Minister of the Right. (See Cranston [1994], 530–31.)

[94] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, supplementary material, 607–8.

[95] The Tachibana no Naramaro conspiracy was an attempted coup by Tachibana no Moroe's eldest son against Fujiwara no Nakamaro (who was backed by Empress Kōken at that time) following the latter's rise in power after Moroe's resignation in 755 and Emperor Shōmu's death in 756. Nakamaro received news of Naramaro's attempts to garner support and swiftly exiled or executed his political opponents. For more information, see *Shoku Nihongi* Vol. 3, 195-243, and Kōjirō, Naoki., & Bock, Felicia, "The Nara State," in D. Brown (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), 261.

posthumously.[96] Similar to Yakamochi, Surugamaro did not soar through the ranks or have the kind of political favor enjoyed by Ōtomo men of previous generations.

The Surugamaro that appears in the *Man'yōshū* is considerably different than his *Shoku Nihongi* counterpart. Similar to Yakamochi throughout most of Volume IV, Surugamaro's poetry in the *Man'yōshū* adopts the persona of a romantic youth and styles him as a courtly gentleman. The obvious historical reason is that the poems were more than likely composed before the earliest records of his political career in 746, based on dates given for other poems surrounding his contributions. Based on his contributions to the *Man'yōshū*, of which there are eleven spread across Volumes III, IV, and VIII, Surugamaro is arguably the most significant male relative in Sakanoue's circle after her nephew Yakamochi, since his poems are often connected to hers, and were either composed in a banquet setting or are concerned with courting her second child, the Younger Daughter of Sakanoue 坂上二嬢 (dates unknown). As noted by Edwin Cranston, an interesting parallel between Surugamaro and Yakamochi within the text of the *Man'yōshū*, is the supposed triangular relationship between each of the men, Sakanoue, and one of her daughters whom they each married.[97] While the Elder Daughter has her own exchanges with Yakamochi, however, there is no such exchange between the Younger Daughter and Surugamaro within the entire anthology. She also has no poetic contributions of her own, and her existence only comes from paratextual information.

There is also not much biographical information on Surugamaro in the paratext of the *Man'yōshū*, except in his first appearance and exchange with Sakanoue in Volume IV in Poems

[96] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 607-08. Surugamaro spent 770 through 773 as governor 守 of several provinces, including Izumo, Higo, and Mutsu, as well as an inspector 按察使 and *chinjufu shogun* 鎮守府将軍 for Mutsu province.

[97] Cranston (1993), 574.

646 through 649. The recorded sequence, which most scholars categorize as an exchange of greetings 起居相聞, is as follows:

大伴宿祢駿河麻呂歌一首
A poem by Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro

大夫之　思和備乍	This valiant man, while being vexed with longing,
遍多　嘆久嘆乎	Grieves many times over. Will you not be the one
不負物可聞	To take charge of his lament?

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

心者　忘日無久	Though in my heart I long for you, not forgetting
雖念　人之事社	For even a day, my lord often stands among
繁君尓阿礼	The thick gossip of others.

大伴宿祢駿河麻呂歌一首
A poem by Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro

不相見而　氣長久成奴	It's been awhile and I haven't met with you.
比日者　奈何好去哉	Dear Little Sister! These days I worry about you;
言借吾妹	Are you in good spirits?

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

夏葛之　不絶使乃	Since the messengers never cease coming as if
不通有者　言下有如	They were kudzu vine, I had thought that there was
念鶴鴨	Something that had happened!

右坂上郎女者佐保大納言卿之女也　駿河麻呂此高市大卿之孫也　兩卿兄弟之家女孫姑姪之族　是以題歌送答相問起居
[The above] Lady Sakanoue was the daughter of his lordship, the Major Counselor of Saho. Surugamaro was the grandson of the Great Lord of Takechi. As the two lords were brothers, the daughter and grandson were related as aunt and nephew. Because of this, they exchanged poems on this theme and inquired after each other's well-being.[98]

[98] MYS IV 646 – 649.

Similar to other endnotes found in this volume, the endnote for Sakanoue and Surugamaro's exchange includes a description of both how they are related to each other and from whom they each descend. To be precise, Sakanoue's father, Yasumaro, was the younger brother of Surugamaro's (supposed) grandfather, Miyuki.[99] By providing the reader this information, the endnote gives the impression of that the two people in the exchange are close, or at least close enough to exchange poems inquiring after each other.

The use of two poetic personas often found in romantic exchanges, the figure of the brave *masurao* who finds himself sighing relentlessly or in tears, and the waiting woman who is skeptical of her beloved because of the rumors that follow him, however, has given some scholars the impression that Sakanoue and Surugamaro's relationship was also romantic in nature. In the preface to his translation of this exchange, Edwin Cranston states that these poems contain "an ardent nature whose implications should be unmistakable," and that the compiler (presumed to be Yakamochi) included the endnote to try to explain away the romantic implications of their exchange.[100] While the language and adopted personas within Sakanoue and Surugamaro's poetic exchange share characteristics with exchanges between people who are undeniably lovers, the reader cannot presume the same for them. For one, it is possible that Sakanoue writes from the perspective of not only herself, but also on behalf of the Younger Daughter. Based on poems in other volumes, Surugamaro seemed to be courting the young woman during this period.[101] As Sakanoue has been shown to write on behalf of other Ōtomo family members in Volume IV, such as the Elder Daughter and Inakimi, it is very much in the

[99] See Appendix A on page 215.

[100] Cranston (1993), 574.

[101] These poems will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.

realm of possiblity that she would adopt the pose of a waiting woman in representing the interests of her second child, too.

Cranston's declaration that these poems are without a doubt love poems is based on an assumption that all exchanges between men and women are inherently romantic in nature, rather than the fact that many *sōmon* exchanges, regardless of the relationship between the two participants, contain similar language and imagery. In addition, his theory that the endnote for Surugamaro and Sakanoue's exchange is included so as to obscure a romantic affair between the two seems exaggerated. While the information given in endnotes throughout Volume Four and the rest of the anthology provide a framework for the poems to which they are attached, it does not mean endnotes are there to hide something. For example, Poems 530 and 531, an exchange between distant relatives Emperor Shōmu and Princess Unakami 海上女王 (dates unknown), could also be read as romantic. It is as follows:

> 天皇賜海上女王御歌一首　寧樂宮即位天皇也
> *A poem bestowed upon Princess Unakami by the Sovereign*
> *He was the sovereign who ascended the throne at the Nara Palace.*[102]
>
> 赤駒之　越馬柵乃　　There are no doubts that Little Sister's heart is bound
> 縦結師　妹情者　　Like the rope fastened to a fence over which
> 疑　毛奈思　　Red horses ride across.
>
> 右今案　此歌擬古之作也　但以時當便賜斯歌歟
> *This poem [above], now judging it, is a work imitating ancient songs, but perhaps it was bestowed upon [her] at an appropriate time?*
>
> 海上王奉和歌一首　志貴皇子之女也
> *A poem in response by Princess Unakami*
> *She was the daughter of Prince Shiki.*[103]

[102] Emperor Shōmu.

[103] Prince Shiki 志貴皇子 (d. 716) was a son of Emperor Tenchi, and at one point in line for the throne. Prince Shiki's son would eventually ascend to the throne as Emperor Kōnin 光仁天皇 (708–781, r. 770–781).

梓弓　爪引夜音之　　I am happy to hear sounds of my lord's procession,
遠音尓毛　君之御幸乎　　Even if distant as the echoes of fingers
聞之好毛　　Strumming catalpa bows at night.[104]

In Poem 530, Shōmu adopts the voice of a man expressing certainty that a woman is faithful to him. Though the author occupies a higher social position than his recipient, his persona expresses vulnerability in suggesting that he cares about how she feels about him. The poem without any paratextual information can easily be read as a love song from the author to his intended audience. The endnote following it, however, alters the intepretation of the poem in two ways. First, by classifying Poem 530 as a work "imitating" the style of ancient songs 擬古之作, the endnotes makes obvious that Shōmu is performing the role of a young man in love in composing his poem. Second, the endnote includes speculation that Shōmu composed and gave this poem to Princess Unakami at a specific ("appropriate") time, likely a banquet.[105] Though it is possible to claim that the speculation in the endnote contextualizes the poem so as to mask any unseemly behavior on the sovereign's behalf, just as Cranston claims is the case for Surugamaro and Sakanoue's exchange in Poems 646 through 649, it is just as likely it is a simple explanation of the conditions under which the poem was composed.

Unlike the poetic voice in Shōmu's Poem 530, the speaker in Unakami's poem is more ambiguous as to whether it from the position of a woman writing to her lover or a subject offering up a poem to her sovereign. The major image of Poem 531, the catalpa bow, appears in poems composed for personal exchanges between nobles as well as songs composed in public

[104] MYS IV, Poems 530-531.

[105] Itō, Vol. 2 (1996), 438.

settings involving the sovereign, including hunting banquets and funeral processions.[106] On the one hand, the image of Unakami listening to the procession in the distance evokes the image of woman listening to her lover travel through the night (possibily to her). The specific mention of the imperial procession renders the poem more formal, however. Combined with the speculation in the endnote to Poem 530, and it becomes clear that, though they might adopt personas often found in love songs, these poems are not depictions of romantic fidelity between a man and a woman, but rather about devotion between sovereign and subject and joy at the arrival of an honored guest at a special occasion. Endnotes are not intended to obscure the actual relationship between two people, but add further context to the poems. In the case of Poems 530 and 531, the poems and their paratext show a close relationship between two branches of the imperial household that descended from Emperors Tenchi and Tenmu.

Returning to Poems 646 through 649, the exchange between Surugamaro and Sakanoue sevres as a textual representation of the relationship between members from two branches in the Ōtomo lineage. This is clear from the endnote, which endeavours to inform the reader as to how they are related and uses that as a reason for why they would exchange poems with each other. While Surugamaro's pending marriage to the Younger Daughter of Sakanoue and the unification of their respective branches is also an explanation for the inclusion of their exchange, it is based on paratextual information found in another volume and therefore might not be directly applicable to this exchange. In his article on Surugamaro and Sakanoue's poem, Ueno Makoto attempts to provide an alternative theory to the prevailing one that Sakanoue wrote poems on

[106] Examples include Poem 3 by Hashihito no Oyu, an exchange between Priest Kume and Lady Ishikawa (Poems 96 through 100), Hitomaro's poem on shedding tears of blood for his wife (Poems 207 through 212), another lament by Hitomaro for a maiden in Tsu of Kibi (Poems 217 through 219), a lament for Prince Shiki's death (Poems 230 through 234), Poem 311 by Kuratsukuri no Masuhito, and Yakamochi's lament at the death of Prince Asaka (Poems 475 through 480).

behalf of the Younger Daughter, claiming that since she is not mentioned in the endnote, she is not important to the scene being portrayed.[107] Instead, by examining this set of poems using various literary contexts such as Sinitic calligraphic practice and indigenous folk beliefs found in other vernacular texts (namely, *Ise monogatari*), Ueno considers the "inner" (*naijitsu* 内実) truth behind this exchange of poems to be a mutually shared literary understanding of resentment based on Sakanoue's Song of Resentment from earlier in the volume.[108] In other words, Ueno argues for reading the poems on both a social and textual level, where he theorizes that Sakanoue's poems both were known and emulated by others in her social circle and provide the blueprint for other contributions that follow it in Volume IV.

While it is difficult to determine the social setting behind these poems, as the text does not explain whether were they letters exchanged in greeting to one another or performed in the setting of a family banquet like many of their other exchanges. In either scenario, however, both Surugamaro and Sakanoue perform as particular literary tropes, and demonstrate how poetic tropes could be used in particular social settings. Surugamaro performs the role of a man exhibiting poor behavior toward a woman about whom he has feelings and, according to Ueno, "curses" her to take responsibility for his longing. In response, Sakanoue's narrator admonishes his behavior, and in doing so, models herself as what Ueno calls an admirable woman けなげな女.[109] Understanding the poetic exchange as such, Ueno's observation about the exchange's connection to the Song of Resentment reinforces Sakanoue's position as protagonist within Volume Four as well as source of inspiration for the literary output of others.

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[107] Ueno Makoto, "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume to Ōtomo no Surugamaro no zōtōka—'urami' o meguru hyōgen no tokusei to naijitsu to." Man'yō kodai kenkyūsho nenpō 5 (2007), 27.

[108] Ibid., 47.

[109] Ibid., 45.

This observation also leads to questions about Surugamaro's general portrayal within, and contributions to, Volume IV and the *Man'yōshū* as a whole. Outside of the exchange with Sakanoue in Poems 646 through 649, poems attributed to him appear in one more section of Volume Four, also placed alongside a couple of poems attributed to Sakanoue. They are as follows:

大伴坂上郎女歌二首
Two poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

久堅乃　天露霜 (ひさかたの　あまのつゆしも)	The time for dew and frost from the far-off heavens
置二家里　宅有人毛 (おきにけり　いへなるひとも)	To fall has arrived. That person at home must be
待戀奴濫 (まちこひぬらむ)	Longing as they wait for me too.
玉主尓　珠者授而 (たまもりに　たまはさづけて)	I gave the jewel to the jewel protector.
勝且毛　枕与吾者 (かつがつも　まくらとわれは)	Be that as it may, my pillow and I now
率二将宿 (いざふたりねむ)	Shall sleep together as two.

大伴宿祢駿河麻呂歌三首
Three poems by Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro

情者　不忘物乎 (こころには　わすれぬものを)	In my heart there are things I would never forget
儻　不見日數多 (たまさかに　みぬひさまねく)	But by chance the days we did not meet were many,
月曽経去来 (つきそへにける)	And a month has come and gone.
相見者　月毛不経尓 (あひみては　つきもへなくに)	Not even a month has gone by since we met
戀云者　乎曽呂登吾乎 (こふといはば　をそろとあれを)	But if I were to speak of longing, I wonder,
於毛保寒毳 (おもほさむかも)	Would you think me too hasty?
不念乎　思常云者 (おもはぬを　おもふといはば)	If I were to say I longed for what I do not yearn
天地之　神祇毛知寒 (あめつちの　かみもしらさむ)	The gods of heaven and earth would also know it.
邑礼左變	*[indecipherable]*[110]

Though Poems 651 and 652 by Sakanoue are right next to Surugmaro's 654 and 655, the

[110] MYS IV 651–655. Japanese commentators have never come to a consensus on how to read the last line of Poem 655. I left it untranslated to reflect this.

connection is less obvious as there is no headnote or endnote to bracket the poems. Some scholars and translators have paired them together, but as Omodaka Hisataka has pointed out, there is no obvious connection in the contents of the poems themselves or the imagery they each use.[111] Both of Sakanoue's poems focus on feelings of separation and loneliness and use images such as dew, frost, jewels, and pillows. They portray a narrator recently separated from a loved one, whom they used to share close proximity. Two heads clearly used to lie down on the pillow in Poem 652, but now the beloved is gone because the narrator "gave" them away to a third party. Surugamaro's poem once again adopts the voice of a romantic hero reassuring someone that his feelings are sincere and that his longing for someone is real. The personas in these poems do not align with another, nor is there a paratextual element such as an endnote to frame these poems as part of an exchange.

The act of Sakanoue's narrator handing her jewel to a jewel-keeper, or letting go of a beloved to another, suggests that the person for whom she yearns is not a romantic partner (i.e., a man), but instead a child or relative. Starting from this poem, a new persona of a parent concerned for her child's well-being emerges in poems attributed to Sakanoue. Various interpretations have guessed that the jewel in question for Poem 562 is either the Elder Daughter or Younger Daughter of Sakanoue, and therefore that the jewel-keeper is either Yakamochi or Surugamaro. Though the placement of Sakanoue's poems next to Surugamaro's suggests that the poem is concerned with his relationship with the Younger Daughter, I am inclined to think that the poem provides stronger textual evidence to the interpretation that it is about the relationship between the Elder Daughter and Yakamochi. For one, the imagery shares similar themes to Poems 723 and 724, a set of poems sent to the Elder Daughter, who is described as waiting and

[111] Omodaka 4, 402.

longing from home while Sakanoue is far away. The pillow image in Poem 652 ties in with the motif of dreams and the image of the distressed daughter as having disheveled and tangled as morning hair. The jewel described complicates matters, however, as descriptions of Sakanoue handing something over to someone else can be found in poems elsewhere concerning the Younger Daughter's marriage to Surugamaro.[112]

Regardless of the jewel's identity, the point remains that Poems 651 and 652 are only tangentially related to Poems 653 through 655 by Surugamaro. What is interesting about these poems, however, is what they reveal about Sakanoue and Surugamaro's positions within Volume IV and the anthology. Sakanoue's poems reveal a shift in how the author is presented, as the voice in her poems changes from the romantic heroine to that of the matriarch arranging and overseeing the relationships of others while dealing with her children growing up and leaving her home. Surugamaro, conversely, is static and does not change throughout the course of Volume IV, or the *Man'yōshū* in general. A major reason for this is because his contributions to the anthology are limited to exchanges with Sakanoue, and a number of them concern his marriage to the Younger Daughter. He is perpetually the romantic hero that has to demonstrate the depth of his feelings toward another. Unlike other male members of the Ōtomo lineage such as Yakamochi and Tabito, his poems never stray outside private family matters and are tied to Sakanoue, as if he were a supporting character in her story. Perhaps the reason for this stasis is related to his role as a conspirator within the Yamato court. The text masks the downfall of Surugamaro's political career in order to rehabilitate his image and reimagines him as a close relative and constant writing companion for Sakanoue, for the poems in this section are not the last exchanges between the two of them.

[112] The Surugamaro examples are specifically Poems 401, and 410 through 411 in Volume Three. These poems will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The relationship between Sakanoue and Surugamaro suggests that one of Sakanoue's functions within the text of the *Man'yōshū* is to help restore the reputations of her male relatives along with her family's legacy in general. As Sakanoue appears at the center of the Ōtomo lineage's marriages and private affairs within the text, the focus on the more intimate parts of their lives obfuscates their political missteps and failures in the public arena. Also, many examples of *sōmon* exchanges between named poets include at least one member of the lineage, which serves as evidence of the family's prowess in this type of poetic composition. In place of political failure comes an enduring literary legacy for the men, with Sakanoue at the center around which they orbit.

Poetic Games with Kinsmen III: Ahe no Mushimaro

The final male relative with whom Sakanoue exchanges poems in Volume IV continues the same theme as the exchange with Surugamaro in Poems 646 through 649, building an image of Sakanoue as a powerful and irresistible force around which her male relatives gather. Going by the name of Ahe no Mushimaro, this noble is a relative through her mother's side. According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, Mushimaro started as a court official working in the offices of the Empress.[113] After participating in an expeditionary force to put Fujiwara no Hirotsugu's rebellion in 740, he was rewarded with a promotion in court rank.[114] Similar to Surugamaro, Mushimaro appears only a few times in the *Man'yōshū,* likely during his younger years before the major events that defined his political career occured. The most context provided as to his

[113] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2*,* pgs. [[change in format here]]333 and 585. Specific titles are 皇后宮亮 and 中務少輔.

[114] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 585, and Cranston (1993), 396.

lineage comes from the endnote to Poems 665 through 667 in Volume IV, in an exchange with Lady Sakanoue:

> 安陪朝臣蟲麻呂歌一首
> *A poem by Ahe no asomi Mushimaro*
>
> 向座而　雖見不飽　(むかひゐて　みれどもあかぬ)　Sitting opposite, never tired of looking
> 吾妹子二　立離徃六　(わぎもこに　たちはなれゆかむ)　At Little Sister, I know not even a way
> 田付不知毛　(たづきしらずも)　To stand up and part from you.
>
> 大伴坂上郎女歌二首
> *Two poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue*
>
> 不相見者　幾久毛　(あひみぬは　いくびさにも)　Though it has not been a long while since
> 不有國　幾許吾者　(あらなくに　ここだくあれは)　We have not seen each other, how am I
> 戀乍裳荒鹿　(こひつつもあるか)　In such terrible longing?
>
> 戀々而　相有物乎　(こひこひて　あひたるものを)　Longing and longing, at last having met with you,
> 月四有者　夜波隠良武　(つきしあれば　よはこもるらむ)　Since the moon is out, it must be deep into the night.
> 須臾羽蟻待　(しましはありまて)　Please stay for a while still!
>
> 右大伴坂上郎女之母石川内命婦与安陪朝臣蟲満之母安曇外命婦同居姉妹同氣之親焉　縁此郎女蟲満相見不踈相談既密　聊作戯歌以為問答也
> *[The above] Lady Sakanoue's mother, Lady Ishikawa of the Inner Palace, and Ahe no asomi Mushimaro's mother, Lady Azumi of the Outer Palace, were sisters who lived together and were close relatives of similar mind. Because of this, the Lady and Mushimaro were not distant in how they looked at each other and had already been initimate in their conversations. Through composing limericks* [tawamure-uta] *with some effort, they created a dialogue [with each other].* [115]

Based on descriptions of the figures within the poems, where Mushimaro's narrator gazes upon the figure of Sakanoue across from him and Sakanoue's narrator asks for him to stay for awhile still, this exchange between Mushimaro and Lady Sakanoue possibly could have occurred during a time where one was visiting the other, perhaps at a private family gathering such as a

[115] MYS IV, Poems 665-667.

banquet.[116] Similar to many other endnotes following exchanges between Sakanoue and other male courties, the endnote provides information abiout the ancestry of each participant. Notably, this exchange focuses on matrilineal relations between Mushimaro and Sakanoue, instead of the patrilineal. In fact, there is no mention of Mushimaro's father or other male relatives from the Ahe lineage within the *Man'yōshū* or any other text such as the *Shoku Nihongi*. The only information about his family history comes from this endnote that establishes his mother and Lady Sakanoue's were sisters who both held high rank within the court, as *myōbu* 命婦 was used for women of at least the fifth rank. There is a distinction between Lady Ishikawa and Lady Azumi's ranks, however, in that Lady Ishikawa held this position through her own heritage, whereas Lady Azumi held it through her husband who was a court official. Given their different surnames, it is likely that Lady Ishikawa and Lady Azumi shared the same mother, but not the same father.

Another peculiar description in the endnote about Lady Ishikawa and Lady Azumi's relationship is that they were "close relatives of similar mind." 同氣之親焉. Commentaries such as Omodaka Hisataka's *Man'yōshū chūshaku* and Tsuchiya Bunmei's *Man'yōshū shichū* believe that the phrase derives from classical Sinitic texts, namely a request Ren Fang wrote on behalf of Emperor Ming of Qi that is included in Chapter 38 of the *Wen xuan* 文選 (*Selection of Refined Literature*). The use of references to classical Sinitic texts in the endnote functions for two separate but related purposes. First, to demonstrate the editor's erudition and knowledge of these texts and situate the collection of poetry which he is collecting within an esteemed literary

[116] Lady Sakanoue has a number of exchanges with family members at "family banquets" 親族宴 in other volumes as *zōka* or *hiyuka*. While Volume IV does not contain explicit examples of poetry classified as being composed at family banquets, as discussed earlier in the chapter, some of these poems contain similar tone and could have been hypothetically produced in similar settings. The question then becomes, what quality determines a poem's classification as *sōmon, zōka,* etc.?

tradition. Second, to also situate the authors and their families within that same literary tradition. This exchange is not only a reflection of the social interactions between Mushimaro and Sakanoue and the closesness of their relationship, but also portrays that relationship using a framework built on Sinitic literary sources.

What modern readers might find particularly interesting from this observation is that women (Lady Ishikawa, Lady Azumi, and Lady Sakanoue) are also included in this framework and literary space. Though the original text in the *Wen xuan* uses the phrase in reference to *brothers* as being of similar mind or spirit, the endnote to Poems 665 through 667 makes a twist and uses it in references to *sisters* instead. Thus, the paratext surrounding the exchange between Mushimaro and Sakanoue suggests that Sinitic literary spaces and frameworks were not solely the dominion of men, and that the compiler deliberately included women within this tradition through the relationship between the two sisters and Lady Sakanoue by proxy of being one of their descendants.

The last element of the endnote that needs to be addressed is the classification of the poems in Mushimaro and Sakanoue's exchange as *tawamure-uta* 戯歌, translated here as "limericks." While *tawamure-uta* can be humorous and playful like the English limerick, my general sense of *tawamure-uta* is that these kinds of poems were not always composed in a trivial manner. Besides Mushimaro and Sakanoue's exchange, there are two other examples in the *Man'yōshū* that use the specific term *tawamure-uta* to classify their poems. The first example is Poem 3835 in Volume Sixteen, composed by a woman in the service of Prince Niitabe 新田部親王 (d. 735):[117] The endnote to this poem is transcribed below:

[117] Prince Niitabe was one of Emperor Tenmu's younger sons.

右或有人聞之曰　新田部親王出遊于堵裏御見勝間田之池感緒御心之中　還自彼池不忍怜愛　於時語婦人曰　今日遊行見勝間田池　水影濤々蓮花灼々　**忸**断腸不可得言　尓乃婦人作此戲歌專輒吟詠也

As for [the above], a person heard and spoke of the following: Prince Niitabe journeyed out to the outskirts of the capital, [and when] he gazed into Katsumata Pond, he was moved deeply in his heart. Even after returning from the pond, he could not hide his yearning. Thereupon he told a serving woman this story, "Today I went out on a journey to see Katsumata Pond. The reflections in the water trembled on its surface, and the lotus blossoms burned forth in full bloom. My heart was so moved by it, and I could not say a word." It is said that the serving woman then immediately made this tawamureuta *and recited it often.*[118]

The second example is a set of four poems Ōtomo no Ikenushi 大伴池主 (d. 757) sent to his relative Yakamochi. They are recorded as Poems 4128 through 4131 in Volume XVIII, a book considered as part of Yakamochi's personal collection. Transcribed below is the headnote for this set:

越前國掾大伴宿祢池主来贈戲歌四首

Four limericks sent from the secretary of Echizen, Ōtomo no sukune Ikenushi

忽辱恩賜　驚欣已深　心中含咲獨座稍開　表裏不同相違何異　推量所由率尓作策歟　明知加言豈有他意乎　凡貿易本物其罪不軽　正贓倍贓宜急并満　今勒風雲發遣徵使　早速返報不須延廻

I unexpectedly received a gift, and was completely, deeply delighted [by it]. Just as I sat down alone, heart filled with laughter, and slowly opened it, [the writing on] the front and back were not the same. Why is there such a difference? If I had to guess the reason, is it to make a plan? Clearly knowing [this], is there any other intention to adding [playful] words? To begin with, replacing genuine items is not a light crime. Whether returning the genuine article or the duplicate, compensation should be made quickly. Now, entrusting this letter to the wind and clouds, I send a messenger. Please respond quickly and do not delay.

勝寶元年十一月十二日　物所貿易下吏

The twelfth day of the eleventh month in the first year of [Tenpyō] Shōhō,[119] *this subordinate whom switched things*

謹訴　貿易人断官司　廳下

Humbly appeals to the permission of officials who judge those whom switched things.

別白　可怜之意不能黙止　聊述四詠准擬睡覺

[118] Endnote to MYS XVI, Poem 3835.

[119] 749 AD

P.S. My heart, filled with pity, cannot keep quiet. Be that as it may, I will say four compositions to keep you awake.[120]

In the particular case of these three examples from the *Man'yōshū*, the *tawamure-uta* are composed within public contexts or capacities. Poem 3835 is composed after Prince Niitabe recounts an excursion he made out to a pond, and the anonymous woman says to have recited the poem often, likely on public occasions such as banquets. Poems 4128 through 4131 accompany a letter addressed to Yakamochi as a public official, in regard to an issue about counterfeit goods. The paratextual information from Sakanoue's exchange with Mushimaro is different from these other two examples in that it focuses mainly on the genealogical relations between the two. It also, however, mentions that Sakanoue and Mushimaro's relationship was close enough that they established a rapport with each other. This reflects a particular intimacy shared between the two, not unlike that believed to have been shared between Yakamochi and Ikenushi.[121] As for connections between Poems 665 through 667, Poems 4128 through 4131, and Poem 3835, though the reasons behind each composition differ, they all show that composing *tawamure-uta* was a primarily social activity meant to create levity for the situation at hand. In Poem 3835, Prince Niitabe's story provides a source for creativity for the anonymous writer, in Ikenushi's current conundrum the need for levity, and in Sakanoue and Mushimaro's exchange, their close relationship is strengthened by the wordplay in which they engage with each other.

Similar to the exchange with Surugamaro in Poems 646 through 649, there has been speculation as to whether Sakanoue's exchange with Mushimaro was purely familial or whether their relationship could have possibly been romantic. For example, Edwin Cranston's

[120] Preface to MYS XVIII, Poems 4128–4131.

[121] Yakamochi and Ikenushi exchanged poems on several occasions, which are recorded over the final four volumes of the *Man'yōshū.* See Cranston (1993), 596–628 for an English translation.

commentary before his translations of the poems once again asks for an explanation as to why Poems 665 through 667 included a note meant to "explain away" the amorous tones of the poems by classifying them as "playful poems."[122] Certainly, Mushimaro's Poem 665 can be read as depicting a man reluctant to part from his beloved. The phrase *miredo akanu* 見れどあかぬ, or "never tire of gazing at," complicates this image, however. While on a surface reading, it seems that Mushimaro's narrator is expressing physical desire toward Sakanoue's narrator, the phrase as seen in other poems throughout the *Man'yōshū* is not always used to express physical desire. As Onodera points out, the majority of the roughly sixty examples recorded in the anthology use the phrase in describing the land or scenes in nature.[123] Of the examples that use the phrase in reference to humans, most refer to a male figure, whether it be an expression of devotion to a lord, someone above the author's station, and a male lover in some cases.[124] Most often the expression is seen in poems classified as laments or banquet poems, both of which are noted for the public nature of their compositions. There are a handful of examples where the person being gazed upon is a woman, from a lament Yakamochi composed on behalf of his son-in-law for his mother (Poem 4214), to a composition in Volume Four (Poem 634) addressed to Prince Yuhara 湯原王 (dates unknown) by a maiden who describes his figure as never tiring upon looking at his wife. There is one other example in the *Man'yōshū* that uses the expression to refer specifically to the affectionate term *imo* 妹, translated as "Little Sister," besides Poem 665, located in

[122] Cranston (1993), 580. He argues that, if these poems were a form of poetic play, they "set a strenuous standard of play."

[123] Onodera (1993), 134.

[124] Examples include Hitomaro's Poem 196, a lament for Princess Asuka that describes how she gazed upon her husband Prince Osakabe, Agata no Inukai's Poem 459, a lament for Ōtomo no Tabito where he describes his gaze upon his lord, Hitomaro's Poem 499 where the narrator describes never tiring of seeing his lover's (male) messenger, Priest Mansei's Poem 572 in reference to Ōtomo no Tabito again, and Yakamochi's Poems 4451 and 4481, both composed at banquets held by Tachibana no Naramaro and Ōhara no Imaki respectively.

Volume XII.[125] In other words, Mushimaro's use of the term to refer to Sakanoue's *imo* is uncommon.

Given the rarity of the phrase being used to describe female paramours, I am inclined to interpret this phrase not as an expression of physical desire, but rather as an implication of Sakanoue's important position within the family structure. Onodera describes this as meaning to be comical on Mushimaro's part, where the "limerick quality" 戯歌性 in his poem comes from his overexaggerating Sakanoue's elevated position.[126] When considering Sakanoue and Mushimaro's exchange within the context of Volume IV and Sakanoue's personal trajectory throughout the book, however, it becomes yet another example of the editing hand positioning Sakanoue as the center around which her male relatives and social peers orbit. Similar to her brother Tabito, who has a handful of poems addressed to his person (459 and 572, specifically) that describe his magnetism using the phrase *miredo akanu*, Sakanoue is portrayed as inspiring devotion and awe within members of her social circle. This framing of her person and her exchanges has left readers across the centuries with the impression of an extremely sociable woman and witty poet who participated in repartee with members from both sides of her family and beyond.

Correspondences with Emperor Shōmu and the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue

While Sakanoue's presence gradually disappears toward the end of Volume IV, her last few poems demonstrate the Ōtomo lineage's proximity to the imperial family as well as the intimate relations between members of her lineage. In one of the last major sections of Volume

[125] MYS XII 2980.

[126] Onodera (1993), 135.

IV to include Sakanoue's poems, her recipients alternate between Emperor Shōmu and her child, the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue. A poem attributed to Yakamochi inserts itself into this section as well, its recipient unknown. The section is as follows:

獻　天皇歌一首　大伴坂上郎女在佐保宅作也

A poem presented to the Sovereign
Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue composed this at the Saho Residence.

足引乃　山二四居者	Since we reside in the leg-cramping mountains
風流無三　吾為類和射乎	we lack elegance. Therefore, I beg you, do not
害目賜名	reproach this meager skill of mine.

大伴宿祢家持歌一首
A poem by Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi

如是許　戀乍不有者	Instead of longing for you in such a manner,
石木二毛　成益物乎	I wish I could be even a rock or a tree,
物不思四手	And not think these anxious things.

大伴坂上郎女従跡見庄賜留宅女子大嬢歌一首　并短歌
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue, sent from the Tomi estate to her child the Elder Daughter who stayed at home, with tanka

常呼二跡　吾行莫國	While I was not going to the distant lands of eternity,
小金門尓　物悲良尓	I recall you there standing by the gate
念有之　吾兒乃刀自緒	With a plaintive look. I think of you, my child and
野干玉之　夜晝跡不言	mistress of the house, throughout the days and
念二思　吾身者痩奴	the bead-black nights, and my body wastes away.
嘆丹師　袖左倍沾奴	I sigh for you, and even my sleeves are drenched.
如是許　本名四戀者	If I am to long for you excessively like this,
古郷尓　此月期呂毛	I shall not be able to last my stay
有勝益士	In our homeland this month.

反歌

Envoy

朝髪之 念乱而 (あさかみの おもひみだれて)
Like morning hair, your thoughts fell into disarray.
如是許 名姉之戀曽 (かくばかり なねがこふれそ)
And just like this, because of your longing for me,
夢尓所見家留 (いめにみえける)
you could be seen in my dreams.

右歌報賜大嬢進歌也
The poem [above] was in response to one sent by the Elder Daughter.

獻 天皇歌二首 大伴坂上郎女在春日里作也
Two poems presented to the Sovereign
Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue composed these at the Kasuga Residence

二寶鳥乃 潜池水 (にほどりの かづくいけみづ)
Water of the pond into which little grebes dive,
情有者 君尓吾戀 (こころあらば きみにあがこふる)
If you have a heart, present to my lord my heart
情示左祢 (こころしめさね)
That is yearning for him.

外居而 戀乍不有者 (よそにゐて こひつつあらずは)
Instead of residing elsewhere and longing from there,
君之家乃 池尓住云 (きみがいへの いけにすむといふ)
I wish to become a duck that lives in
鴨二有益雄 (かもにあらましを)
The pond of my lord's estate.[127]

Given information found in other paratextual materials as well as the general timeline of the volume, these compositions are presumably from a time after Sakanoue's elder brothers Tabito and Sukunamaro have passed away and Sakanoue as the interim head of the clan is maintaining relations with the court and imperial family in their stead. Poem 721 utilizes the image and *makura-kotoba* of "leg-cramping mountains" 足引山 (*ashihiki no yama*) in order to convey a sense of distance between the speaker and the recipient both physically and metaphorically, as she ties this image to a supposed lack of courtly elegance, or *miyabi* 風流. Poems 725 and 726

[127] MYS IV, Poems 721–26.

(the last two) utilize the image of various waterfowl in order to convey a subject's loyalty to their emperor. The speaker in Poem 725 specifically likens herself to the grebes, otherwise known as "*nihodori*," 二寶鳥 and implores the water of the pond to present to her lord (the emperor) her yearning heart. Likewise, in Poem 726 the speaker notes that it would be better to be a duck living in the pond of the emperor's estate rather than to be a human longing from afar.

Though the language utilized in the group of poems sent to Emperor Shōmu depicts a figure filled with deep longing, there is no clear indication of the speaker's gender beyond the name provided in the headnotes. Since the speaker and recipient are of two different genders, this might be a reason for their inclusion in a volume dedicated primarily to *sōmon* poetry (private correspondences), which were often exchanged between men and women. However, we can also think of these poems as being based on a poetic tradition where members of the nobility demonstrate their relationship with the sovereign through poetic expression. In that sense, we can think of these three poems as demonstrating the relationship between the sovereign and not just Sakanoue, but the Ōtomo lineage as a whole. Shortly after Sakanoue's elder brother Tabito was assigned to Dazaifu as its governor, an incident occurred in 729 where the Fujiwara brothers accused his political ally Prince Nagaya of witchcraft and sedition, forcing him to commit suicide. As a result, the Ōtomo experienced a major downturn in their political fortunes. However, Sakanoue's poems can be viewed as evidence of a kind of "recovery" in their relationship with the imperial family, as the fact that she sent poems to Shōmu suggests intimate ties on both a personal and political level. Moreover, Sakanoue's poems compensate for any anxieties concerning political distance between the Ōtomo and the imperial family through the use of *sōmon* poetic language in order to express a close relationship. The fact that these songs were included in Volume IV provides another example of how not just this volume, but the

Man'yōshū as an anthology is used to express the bonds between the imperial family and the Ōtomo on a literary level.

In between these poems, however, are also exchanges sent to the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue, who stayed behind while Sakanoue was making her rounds at court. According to the endnotes, the elder daughter also sent her mother poems, but they are not included in the *Man'yōshū*. In the two poems from Sakanoue, feelings of longing between mother and child are depicted through the use of several intense corporeal images such as sleeves drenched with tears, bodies wasting away, and thoughts tangled like morning hair. Connecting this back to the poems presented to Shōmu, it is clear that the overarching theme of this section is longing from afar, but why place side-by-side poems depicting a mother's love for her daughter and poems swearing devotion to a sovereign? And what to make of Yakamochi's single poem that appears in the middle of all of this?

Simply put, this section is arranged in such a manner to highlight the relationships within and without the Ōtomo vis-à-vis Sakanoue as the central figure. After the Nagaya Incident and Tabito's death, the Ōtomo's political position was declining and Yakamochi was not yet old enough to lead the clan. The middle section of Volume IV reflects this with multiple exchanges between Ōtomo members as well as depicting Yakamochi's various love affairs, indicating a turn toward the inner workings of the clan and Yakamochi's focus on more personal affairs. Sakanoue's exchanges with her kin, including the Elder Daughter and Yakamochi among others, illustrates her position as trying to hold everyone in the group together through poetic exchanges. In other words, in a time of transition, where leadership of the Ōtomo had not yet completed its transfer from Tabito to Yakamochi, the depiction of Sakanoue in Volume IV acts as the center around which revolve the various political and personal relationships between the Ōtomo as well

as with other important political figures. The inclusion of Yakamochi's poem, which simply describes a narrator filled with longing (for whom is not clear), portrays Yakamochi as a young man who is perhaps unconcerned with the politics that his aunt is clearly invested in. At the same time, it also illustrates the close proximity between aunt and nephew on a literary level as well as a social one. Given that Yakamochi is likely the final compiler for this sequence, the decision to include or keep his aunt's poems sent to Emperor Shōmu and the Elder Daughter reflects the dual roles Sakanoue likely held in the interim between Tabito's death and Yakamochi's coming-of-age as both the public-facing clan head and matriarch in charge of the lineage's personal affairs.

Considering that the section following this focuses on the Elder Daughter and her relationship with Yakamochi, Sakanoue's poems to her daughter in the section above can be viewed as a prelude to the culmination of their relationship, displayed through a sequence of exchanges in Poems 727 through 755. Poems 723 and 724, then, can be understood as expressing Sakanoue's anxiety about her daughter's happiness and her marriage to Yakamochi (which Sakanoue most likely orchestrated). Beginning with the Elder Daughter's poem sent to Yakamochi in Section D, a sequence focusing on the women surrounding Yakamochi, there is a clear theme about their relationship that is repeated throughout Volume Four. This effectively creates a sub-narrative concerning the future of the Ōtomo lineage. Many of Sakanoue's poems are placed in proximity to the exchanges between the Elder Daughter and Yakamochi, as if they are interrupting or coming in between the relationship between the two. This *chōka-hanka* set is also placed after a series of exchanges Yakamochi has with another young woman (Poems 714-720), further strengthening an argument that these poems are not just about Sakanoue's anxiety regarding her daughter's well-being, but also her relationship with Yakamochi and the future of

the Ōtomo lineage. Considering that what immediately follows the last two poems sent to Shōmu is a long exchange between Yakamochi and the Elder Daughter, on a textual level it seems that the relationship has a stable foundation, thereby securing the future of the lineage. Yakamochi has grown from a passionate, wandering youth into the next leader, taking over arranging marriages among other duties as seen in the exchange with Fujiwara no Kusumaro.

As a result of the paratextual elements surrounding this sequence, a narrative is created within the text that merges two sides of Sakanoue: that of a public figure whose social relationships are of political importance for her clan and a mother expressing how much she misses her child. Her poems reveal an anxiety about her lineage's descendants as well as the ambiguous future they have within the Yamato court. By arranging these poems so that they overlap, the two narratives surrounding the Ōtomo lineage and the court come into contact with one another through Sakanoue's figure. In addition, the inclusion of Yakamochi's poem in the middle of the sequence brings her into contact on a textual level with the third and final major Ōtomo figure who also held a large influence over the *Man'yōshū's* compilation. In this last significant sequence for Sakanoue in Volume IV, threads of narratives laid out in previous poems weave together through the content of the poems themselves as well as the paratextual information that surrounds them. Sakanoue has been trying to keep her lineage united, while also maintaining their ties to the imperial family. Yakamochi and the Elder Daughter's subsequent (and longest) exchange between Poems 727 and 755 thus can be read as the realization of Sakanoue's hopes for her daughter and the Ōtomo.

Conclusion: Narrativizing *Sōmon* and Sakanoue

Paratextual elements such as headnotes, endnotes, sequences and arrangements perform a significant narrativizing function in the *Man'yōshū*. By representing certain types of relationships vis-à-vis poetic composition, these elements either illuminate or obscure the sociohistorical conditions under which the poems were composed and the *Man'yōshū* was anthologized. In other words, when we consider elements such as headnotes and endnotes as paratexts that frame the main body of the poetic exchange, the political aspects embedded in *sōmon* poetry become patently obvious.

In the case of Sakanoue's position within the text of Volume IV, it is clear from the information provided about her deep social ties, through biographical descriptions and exchanges included for compilation, that the reader is meant to consider her as a prominent figure within the Ōtomo lineage and Yamato court. These elements effectively *construct* the author herself, transforming her into an agent exerting control over the political destiny of her clan in the wake of personal and political tragedy. This manifests in Volume IV as the gradual insulation of the Ōtomo, first through Sakanoue's rebuff of Fujiwara no Maro in favor of her kin, and then Yakamochi's union with the Elder Daughter, which is encouraged by Sakanoue. While other volumes of the *Man'yōshū* with a large Ōtomo presence have a more balanced representation of the triad that is Tabito, Sakanoue, and Yakamochi, Volume IV is unique in its favor toward showcasing Sakanoue's poetic talents. The is probably due to *sōmon* poetry's strong association with female poets: the majority of contributions by named women in the *Man'yōshū* are identified as such, and over half of Sakanoue's poems fall in this category.

This does not mean, however, that *sōmon* poetry and the poets who specialized in it were removed from the social and political environment in early Japan. *Sōmon* poetry as presented in

the *Man'yōshū* can be just as revealing of the imperial court's history and the political tensions that reside therein as the many elegies and banquet compositions that fill the scrolls of volumes dedicated to such poems. In reading Volume IV not as a random collection of poems, but as a text that integrates them into a narrative, it becomes possible to recontextualize our understanding of *sōmon* poetry. It also reveals the impact women such as Sakanoue had on the social fabric of their lineages and the court in general.

As we consider the position of Sakanoue's poems within the larger structures of the *Man'yōshū*, it also becomes possible to see certain patterns repeat across other volumes and with other poets associated with Sakanoue on a textual and familial level. The following chapter focuses on Sakanoue's contributions to the *zōka* and *banka* categories in Volume III, which include what is known as the God-Worshiping Song 祭神歌 and an elegy to a Buddhist nun from Silla. Though they are categorically different than the ones in Volume IV, these poems historically have also been interpreted as poems depicting little more than private emotions and affairs exclusively dealing with the Ōtomo lineage. By employing the framework proposed in this chapter, I will argue that these poems actually reveal the type of political power high-ranking women such as Sakanoue could wield during this time in Japanese history.

Chapter Two

Performing the Roles of Clan Matriarch and Loyal Subject: Sakanoue in Volume III

Introduction: Public Poetic Modes of Expression

Although Lady Sakanoue figures prominently as a protagonist of Volume IV, her presence is not nearly as strong in the rest of the anthology except for Volume VIII, which includes over twenty of her poems. Her remaining twenty-five poems are scattered among Volumes III, VI, and XVII through XIX. While the latter three volumes are contained within a subsection now often described as Ōtomo no Yakamochi's personal collection, or a "poetic diary" 歌日記,Volumes III and VI along with IV and VIII, like most of the *Man'yōshū*, are believed to have been edited in stages with multiple compilers involved. In addition, these volumes comprised part of an earlier draft of the anthology before the inclusion of the Yakamochi volumes in the latter half of the eighth-century.[128] In other words, the anthological and historical contexts of Volumes III and VI have stronger ties to Volumes IV and VIII than to Volumes XVII through XIX. What this means for poets such as Sakanoue is that, regardless of differences between volumes in terms of poetic categories and number of poems by each poet included, there are still similarities in their portrayals across Volumes III, IV, VI, and VIII.

Yet the structure of each individual book and its paratextual elements still matter in terms of how authors are portrayed and the topics about which they write. The books covered in this

[128] Itō Haku is credited for the prevailing theory that the first sixteen volumes were compiled first and consist of the "old collection," with the original book consisting of Poems 1–53 of what is now Volume I. See Itō Haku, *Man'yōshū no kōzō to seiritsu.* 2 vols. *Kodai wakashi kenkyū* Vols. 1 and 2. Tokyo: Hanawa shobō, 1974, for more information. Nakanishi Susumu counters this structure and argues that 1) the number of volumes was not established at twenty by the time the collection passed into Yakamochi's hands and 2) each of the last four volumes was written by a different person. For more information, see Nakanishi Susumu, ed. *Man'yōshū o manabu hito no tame ni*. Tokyo: Sekai shisōsha, 1992. For a summary of Itō's theory and Nakanishi's response on the stages of the *Man'yōshū*'s development, see Horton (2012), 448–58. Torquil Duthie notes that, although the first sixteen volumes contain a variety of organizing principles, they share a number of characteristics, including a kind of "subplot" involving the Ōtomo lineage that culminates in the last four books. (Duthie [2014], 179).

and the following chapter, Volumes III and VI, contain poems classified as either *zōka* ("miscellaneous poems"), *banka* ("laments"), or *hiyuka* ("metaphorical poems"). Unlike *sōmon* poetry, poems classified using the above categories are presumed to have been composed in at least semi-public or formal settings, often at moments for levity or solemnity for members of the court. Sakanoue has at least one contribution within each of the categories listed above, the number of which exceeds most other women poets and even some male members of her own lineage.

The Sakanoue that appears within these settings, however, is neither a romantic heroine nor a devoted mother as she was in much of Volume IV. Instead, the author is portrayed as a public figure with social responsibilities both within the Ōtomo family residences and as a member of the larger realm centered around the sovereign and his or her court. The reason for such a shift in persona has as much to do with the various ideological motivations surrounding the compilation of each volume as it does with the social and historical conditions under which each poem was written. With most of its poetry composed during the eighth century, Volume III's collection of *zōka, hiyuka*, and *banka* operates as a partner to Volume IV's collection of *sōmon* correspondences with its collection of newer styles of poetry in public modes of discourse. Both function as sequels to Volumes I and II that contain poetry from earlier reigns. Within the scope of Volume III, Sakanoue appears as an avatar embodying the spirit of the Ōtomo lineage and its allegiance to the imperial family with poems composed on a variety of occasions surrounding the figure of the sovereign.[129] This portrayal is in stark contrast to that of

[129] In discussing Volumes I and II, Duthie describes the *zōka* section as containing poems "that outline the spatial configuration of the realm surrounding the sovereign," and the *banka* sequence as "[mourning] the loss of royal figures that are the center of the imperial order… as well as of the lower ranking courtiers and people from beyond the capital who gibe shape to the broader realm." (Duthie 2014, 195) I consider these sections in Volume III as organized for similar (if not the same) purposes.

other women poets, who as a whole seem to disappear from public textual spaces after the first two books of the *Man'yōshū*. The reason for this relates to Sakanoue's position within her family and the court as a whole.

The Gendering of Public Textual Spaces

The stereotype of the *Man'yōshū* as a "masculine" anthology is not simply due to the influence of commentators throughout the centuries since its compilation but has some basis in the text itself. The majority of recorded compositions by women are limited to a handful of volumes and a singular poetic category (*sōmon*). When it comes to *zōka* written for public events such as banquets, processions, and hunts or *banka* written to mourn the dead, figures such as Hitomaro, Yamabe no Akahito, and Yamanoue no Okura come to mind before Princess Nukata or Lady Sakanoue. Although the first volume of the *Man'yōshū* includes numerous compositions on public occasions by women poets, later volumes do not, suggesting that women in the eighth century were excluded from certain sociocultural spaces to which they had previously had access in the seventh. As a consequence, women writers take up less textual space in later volumes of the *Man'yōshū*. The following table compares the number of women and the events or topics described in the first four books that have at least one section dedicated to *zōka* poetry:

	Reigns & Time Periods Covered	Number of Named Poets (# of Women)	Names of Women	Events/Topics Covered
Volume I (84 poems)	Fifth century (Emperor Yūryaku) to early eighth century (Empress Genmei?)	36 (10)	Princess Nukata, Princess Nakatsu, Empress Jitō, Princess Ae, Tagima no Maro's Wife, Princess Yoza,	Imperial processions to villas and hot springs, seasonal poetry, travel, imperial hunts, erotic longing,

			the Toneri Maiden, the Suminoe Maiden, Empress Genmei, Princess Minabe	military drills, allegiance, longing for home
Volume III, *Zōka* section (155 poems)	Late seventh century (Empress Jitō?) up to 733 (Emperor Shōmu)	52 or 53 (6)	Empress Genmei?, Old Woman Shihi, Lady Abe, Takechi no Kurohito's Wife, Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue, the Tsukushi Maiden	Banter between sovereign and servant, burning of a hill, scenic descriptions, prayer to clan deity, travel blessings
Volume V (114 poems)	728 through 733? (Undated poems at the end, Emperor Shōmu)	36 or 37 (1[130])	Maidens along the Matsura River	Descriptions of Matsura and homes, erotic longing for the travelers
Volume VI (161 poems)	723 through 744 (End of Empress Genshō, majority of Emperor Shōmu's)	46 or 47 (4 to 6[131])	Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue, an entertainer 遊行女婦 named Koshima, Empress Genshō, an entertainer named Ōyake, an *uneme* from Toyoshima	Travel songs about longing, songs of parting, travel blessings, songs about the moon, family banquets, bestowal of surnames, pilgrimages to shrines, banquet poems about the countryside/scenery (?), poem accompanying a gift to the emperor

While women are still a minority in the early volumes of the *Man'yōshū*, Volume I clearly has a closer ratio than Volumes III and VI. It is not simply that, despite containing more poetry, the

[130] Poems 854 and 858 through 860 are cited as coming from a group of goddess-like maidens near the Matsura River. Since they are not differentiated and there is no number recorded, I have counted them as one entity.

[131] The authorship of Poems 1009 is contested. Possible candidates are Retired Empress Genshō, Emperor Shōmu, or Empress Consort Kōmyō. Poems 1026 and 1027 were apparently sung by an *uneme* from Toyoshima, but they are likely not her own compositions.

latter two books have a smaller number of women writers. Poets such as Akahito, Tabito, and Yakamochi also have multiple entries and take up large amounts of space on the page or scroll, whereas high-ranking women such as Sakanoue and female sovereigns only have one or two *zōka* poems recorded in Volumes III and VI,[132] and the majority of them are *tanka*. In addition, the events at which these poems were composed tend to be confined to intimate gatherings rather than imperial processions or state-sanctioned banquets. Princess Nukata's composition on the merits of Spring versus Autumn is presented as a public display of her poetic prowess during a banquet sponsored by Emperor Tenchi.[133] Sakanoue's opening song for a family banquet on the impermanence of life or a female entertainer named Koshima wishing Tabito well on his journey back to the capital,[134] on the other hand, provide glimpses into an intimate space in which men and women interacted with one another using literary sport. Besides female sovereigns and their attendants, high-ranking women in Volumes III and VI are not seen composing poetry at public events. Only in Volume VI are female entertainers and *uneme* found at public sites and events.

As for the category of *banka*, the subjects of women's laments also appear to be limited in scope. While the number of named poets in each volume is about the same overall, there is a slight decline in the number of women poets from seven to four. Below is another table comparing the two volumes that contain *banka*:

	Reign & Time Periods Covered	Number of Named Poets (# of Women)	Names of Women	Subject of Poem
Volume II, *Banka* section (94 poems)	Mid-seventh century (Empress Saimei) through	17 (7)	Empress Consort Yamatohime, one of Tenchi's	Emperor Tenchi, Emperor Tenmu, Prince Ōtsu,

[132] Sakanoue has multiple *zōka* entries in Volume VI (eleven to be exact).

[133] Volume I, Poem 16.

[134] Volume VI, Poems 995 and Poems 965 and 966 respectively.

	715 (death of Prince Shiki, Empress Genmei or Genshō?)		wives, an Ishikawa wife, Princess Nukata, Empress Jitō, Princess Ōku, the Yosami maiden	Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
Volumes III, *Banka* section (69 poems)	Late sixth/early seventh century (Empress Suiko) to 744 (death of Prince Asaka, Emperor Shōmu)	18 (4)	Princess Tamochi, Princess Niu, Princess Kurahashibe, Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue	Prince Kōchi, Prince Iwata, Prince Nagaya, Nun Rigan

Similar to Volume I, the female poets recorded and memorialized in Volume II are mainly affiliated with the imperial household as princesses, female sovereigns, or the wives of male sovereigns. Notably, the majority of *banka* by women in Volume II are written in honor of Emperor Tenchi after his passing. The Yosami Maiden's lament stands out in comparison to the others as she is a lower-ranking woman. The subject of her lament, however, is none other than Kakinomoto no Hitomaro, who would become a model of vernacular poetic composition in later centuries.[135]

The majority of the women recorded in Volume III's *banka* section are also members of the imperial family writing about their relatives. This includes Princess Kurahashibe's lament for her father[136] Prince Nagaya, who was falsely accused of treason and forced to commit suicide. The one poet who stands out in this group is Lady Sakanoue, a high-ranking noble woman but

[135] For a study of the history of Hitomaro's reception and canonization as poetic exemplar in premodern Japan, see Commons, Anne. *Hitomaro: Poet as God*. Leiden: Brill, 2009. As for reception within the *Man'yōshū*, Yakamochi refers to Hitomaro, and possibly another poet, in the headnote to a poem sent to his relative Ikenushi (MYS XVII Poem 3969) when he says he "never took [himself] to the gates of Sanshi" in his youth 幼年未逕山柿之門 (translation from Cranston [1993]). The meaning is that he never seriously studied the works of *waka* poets, whose names presumably begin with the characters *san/yama* 山 and *shi/Kaki* 柿,when he was a young man. *Shi* clearly refers to Hitomaro, but the meaning of *san* is ambiguous. While Hitomaro's deification would not begin for some time yet, his poetry was at the very least admired by Yakamochi.

[136] MYS III, Poem 441. For an English translation, see Levy (1981), 222.

not a princess. Her lament is also for a lower-ranking woman, which makes her *banka* contribution unusual. Unlike the case of Volume II, there are no laments written for any sovereigns in Volume III by either men or women. Instead, Volume III contains laments for people of differing social classes, including several anonymous figures.

Notably, there many examples of men weeping over the deaths of women across the realm, from Hitomaro's laments following the cremation of maidens in Hatsuse and Yoshino to Yakamochi's multiple songs toward the end of the volume grieving over the death of his first wife.[137] There is only one example of a woman lamenting over the death of another woman, and that is Sakanoue's lament for the nun Rigan in Poems 460 and 461. While I will discuss the poems in more detail later in the chapter, I bring them up now to reiterate the point that women were limited in the topics about which they could compose poetry. In the particular case of *banka*, examples from women in the *Man'yōshū* are more limited in scope as compared to the topics of their *zōka* contributions. This includes seventh-century poets such as Princess Nukata, who by all accounts was a major figure participating in public events sponsored by the state.

What does the gradual restriction of women's cultural production in public spaces mean for a figure such as Sakanoue? Even though poetic compositions by women are few in Volume III, she still has a contribution in every section from *zōka* to *banka* to the new poetic category of *hiyuka*.[138] However, the paratextual framing devices for each of her contributions in this volume contextualize them as belonging to more private settings, and the poetic voices contained therein can be (and often are) interpreted as belonging to the category of *sōmon* instead. This means that

[137] See MYS III, Poems 428–37 for compositions by Hitomaro, Akahito, and Kawabe no Miyahito mourning the deaths of anonymous women, and Poems 462–74 for Yakamochi's series of poems lamenting the death of his first wife. For English translations, see Levy (1981), 218–21, and 231–35.

[138] Like Sakanoue, Yakamochi is normally represented in every section of an "Ōtomo" book besides Volume V (III, IV, VI, and VIII). He does not have a poem included in the *zōka* section of Volume III.

a number of her poems recorded in Volume III are often interpreted by scholars and translators as love poems, or simply examples of poetic play as social interactions.

As I will demonstrate in the rest of this chapter, similar to Volume IV the structure of Volume III and arrangement of poems suggests an ideological framework behind the inclusion of Sakanoue's poems. Namely, her poems represent a crucial transitory period in leadership of the Ōtomo lineage following Tabito's death as well as demonstrate the general scope of the sovereign's power over his realm. According to scholars such as Itō Haku, Volumes III and IV function as a transition at the end of the seventh century into the first half of the eighth century between "ancient" 古 and "modern" 今 styles of poetry in all major poetic categories, plus a new one in *hiyuka*.[139] Considering the prevalence of poets from the Ōtomo lineage in these volumes, it could be said that one editorial motivation for these books is to showcase its members—in particular Tabito, Sakanoue, and Yakamochi—as inheritors and innovators of poetic tradition and practice. That motivation is the purpose behind including contributions from Sakanoue in all of the major categories of *sōmon, zōka, and banka.* Through her works, the reader catches a glimpse into the contexts and capacities in which a woman of her station composed poetry, even if those examples are the only example of their kind recorded for posterity.

The God-Worshiping Song I: Overview of Previous Scholarship

The *saishinka* 祭神歌, or "God-Worshiping Song," best represents the tension underlying studies on Sakanoue and her body of work: scholars perceive her as primarily a love poet focused on private family matters no matter their historical or anthological contexts. The "God-Worshiping Song" is Sakanoue's first sequence recorded in Volume Three, and the earliest to

[139] See Itō *Man'yōshū no kajin to sakuhin* 1, 176–77.

appear in the *Man'yōshū*. In the notes framing the *chōka* and *hanka* set, it is recorded that the topic of the poem is on worshiping the gods, and that these poems were composed in the year 733 during the time of worshiping the clan gods. The *chōka* begins with a description of the narrator performing a variety of ritual activities, giving a detailed account of the objects involved as if the narrator is acting these rituals out step by step. By the end, however, the poem's tone shifts into a personal expression of doubt about whether the speaker will be able to meet the "lord" for whom she prays:

大伴坂上郎女祭神歌一首　并短歌
A poem about worshiping the gods by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue, with tanka.

ひさかたの　あまのはらより 久堅之　天原従	To the lord gods who descended from distant,
あれきたる　かみのみこと 生来　神之命	Infinite fields of heaven in which they were born,
おくやまの　さかきのえだに 奥山乃　賢木之枝尓	I tie branches of *sakaki* from secluded mountains
しらかつけ　ゆふとりつけて 白香付　木綿取付而	With white threads, and take mulberry strands and tie them.
いはひへを　いはひほりすゑ 齋戸乎　忌穿居	I place in the earth sacred jars filled with *sake*,
たかたまを　しじにぬきたれ 竹玉乎　繁尓貫垂	And I string many bamboo beads along a cord.
ししじもの　ひざをりふして 十六自物　膝折伏	Like a deer or boar I fall on bended knees
たわやめの　おすひとりかけ 手弱女之　押日取懸	And take the stole of a delicate maiden,
かくだにも　あれはこひなむ 如此谷裳　吾者祈奈牟	But even like this alas, can I not meet
きみにあはじかも 君尓不相可聞	My lord for whom I shall pray?

反歌
Envoy

ゆふたたみ　てにとりもちて 木綿畳　手取持而	I take in hand and hold folded mulberry offerings,
かくだにも　あれはこひなむ 如此谷母　吾波乞菅	But even like this, alas, can I not meet
きみにあはじかも 君尓不相鴨	My lord for whom I shall pray?

右歌者　以天平五年冬十一月供祭大伴氏神之時　聊作此歌　故曰祭神歌

> *The poem [above] was somehow composed during the time of worshiping the Ōtomo clan god in the Eleventh Month of Tenpyō 5* [733]. *Therefore, it is called a god-worshiping poem.*[140]

Despite its placement in a volume dedicated to poetry composed during formalized events, such as banquets and hunts, and dirges for the deceased, most scholarship has focused on a supposed conflict lying within the God-Worshiping Song. Namely, the issue identified by scholars is the poem's apparent mixing of public activities such as leading the clan in worshiping the gods, with the expression of a desire to meet someone at the end of the *chōka* and again in the envoy. This has created much discussion on how to interpret the poem and compare it to other similar poems in the *Man'yōshū*.

The two pieces of English-language scholarship that discuss the God-Worshiping Song focus on the supposed lack of propriety in composing a poetic sequence mixing public act with private sentiment. In their seminal book *Japanese Court Poetry* (1961), Robert Brower and Earl Miner note that "the novel thing about this poem lies in its strange use of public materials," but ultimately judge the God-Worshiping Song as being inferior to Hitomaro's *chōka* due to its personal and informal nature.[141] Their evaluation of this poem reflects a pervasive attitude in discussions of *waka* poetry: namely that poetry composed in the vernacular—and the *chōka* in particular—flourished as a literary art form during Hitomaro's lifetime and then waned in quantity and quality due to emerging influences from the continent.[142] Brower and Miner take the God-Worshiping Song as representative of this decline, tying it to a constructed narrative about the history of Japanese poetry.

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[140] MYS III, Poems 379–380.

[141] Brower and Miner (1962), 102.

[142] For example, Sakurai Mitsuru states that the *chōka* form was at its apex with Hitomaro and then continued to decline after. See Sakurai Mitsuru, *Man'yōshū no fūdo*. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978.

Edwin Cranston adopts a less judgmental attitude in *A Waka Anthology; The Gem-Glistening Cup* (1993) when discussing the God-Worshiping Song. While he deems the set to be "the most unusual of her poems," he also writes that "rather than judge the lady sacrilegious, however, it is more satisfactory to interpret the first sixteen lines of the poem as an extended metaphor for the intense anxiety of her passion, a metaphor suggested to her by actually having enacted the rite."[143] Though Cranston does not take the apparent mixing of private longing with public ritual as a sign of the *chōka*'s downfall as a literary form, he still is compelled to address the issue of whether the poem is meant to be private or public. Cranston's comment is likely a response to Brower and Miner's criticism of both the poem and Sakanoue as a poet, as he praises her for what he sees as deft use of amorous language and exceptional sociability throughout the section dedicated to her in his anthology of translations.

The above scholars all make certain assumptions regarding Sakanoue's status as a woman in their interpretation of the God-Worshiping Song. They assume that the *kimi*—or lord—in question is a lover of hers and take this poem to be romantic at its core in general. This is because *waka* poetry composed by women has been historically associated with topics around love. Furthermore, English-speaking audiences with any working knowledge of premodern Japanese literature are more likely familiar with figures such as Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu—each known for writing passionate verses on yearning for men never there. Given that fact, it is not surprising that past scholarship has interpreted the God-Worshiping Song as primarily an example of love poetry.

Japanese scholars also attempt to reconcile the apparent problem between the poem's public setting and "private" sentiments by trying to solve two interlinked mysteries. The first is

[143] Cranston (1993), 408.

the identity of the "lord" mentioned in the poem, and the second is the exact circumstances surrounding Sakanoue's position within the Ōtomo lineage at the time. The possible candidates for the lord in question can be summarized as follows:

1. The Ōtomo ancestral god, Ame no Oshihi no Mikoto
2. Ōtomo no Tabito, Sakanoue's older half-brother
3. Ōtomo no Sukunamaro, Sakanoue's other older half-brother and recently deceased husband
4. An unspecified lover
5. Not a real person (in other words, a literary invention)[144]

Although there is evidence to support each of these theories, none of them are entirely satisfactory. A general assumption of most interpretations is that Sakanoue's longing is romantic in nature and that the God-Worshiping Song is a love song at its core. The basis for such an assumption is Sakanoue's strong affiliation with the *sōmon* category. In fact, Asano Noriko titles her entry for the sequence as, "Lady Sakanoue's God-Worshiping Song: The Invasion of Love Poetry," 坂上郎女の祭神歌—恋歌の侵略 in Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Sakamoto Nobuyuki's *Seminaa Man'yō no kajin to sakuhin*, a series of overviews of *Man'yō* poets and their major works.[145]

There is admittedly some textual evidence that can be used to support such an interpretation. As pointed out by commentators such as Omodaka Hisataka, the God-Worshiping Song shares similarities with the following five poems from Volume XIII, a book dedicated to anonymous *sōmon* poems:

菅根之　根毛一伏三向凝呂尓　So that there are not even words of misfortune
吾念有　妹尓縁而者　About that girl, my Little Sister, to whom
言之禁毛　無在乞常　I long to be close like the roots of sedge,

[144] This list is adapted from one published in a chapter on the God-Worshiping Song by Asano Noriko. For more, see Asano Noriko. "Sakanoue no Iratsume no Saishinka—koiuta no shinryaku." In *Seminaa Man'yō no kajin to sakuhin*, Vol. 10. Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Sakamoto Nobuyuki, eds. Tokyo: Izumi shoin (2004), 35.

[145] Asano (2004), 28.

齋戸乎　石相穿居　　I bury in the earth sacred jars of *sake*
竹珠乎　無間貫垂　　And tightly string bamboo beads along a cord,
天地之　神祇乎曽吾祈　　Earnestly praying to the gods of Heaven and Earth,
甚毛為便無見　　For there is nothing else to do.

今案　不可言之「因妹者」　應謂之「縁君」也　何則反歌云「公之随意」焉
Thinking on it now, it should not say "about Little Sister." Surely, it should be "about my lord." The reason is that it says "At the mercy of my lord" in the envoy.

反歌
Envoy

足千根乃　母尓毛不謂　　This hidden heart that I have not even revealed
褁有之　心者縦　　To my mother whose breasts hang low, oh, it is
公之随意　　At the mercy of my lord!

或本歌曰
In a certain book, the poem reads:

玉手次　不懸時無　　When it comes to my lord for whom I have longed,
吾念有　君尓依者　　Even in times when not attaching jeweled cords,
倭文幣乎　手取持而　　I take in hand offerings of Yamato cloth
竹珠叫　之自二貫垂　　And I string many bamboo beads along a cord,
天地之　神叫曽吾乞　　Earnestly praying to the gods of Heaven and Earth,
痛毛須部奈見　　For there is nothing else to do.

反歌
Envoy

乾坤乃　神乎禱而　　Praying to the gods of Heaven and Earth,
吾戀　公以必　　Will I not for certain be able to meet with him,
不相在目八方　　My lord for whom I am longing?

或本歌曰
In a certain book, the poem reads:

大船之　思憑而　　Relying on and yearning for a great ship's visit
木妨己　弥遠長　　But hoping the kudzu vine stretches long and far

我念有　君尓依而者　　In order for there not to be even words
言之故毛　無有欲得　　Of harm about my lord for whom I am longing,
木綿手次　肩荷取懸　　I drape mulberry strands upon my shoulders,
忌戸乎　齋穿居　　I bury in the earth sacred jars of *sake*,
玄黄之　神祇二衣吾祈　　Earnestly praying to the gods of Heaven and Earth,
甚毛為便無見　　For there is nothing else to do.

右五首
[The above is] five poems.[146]

As indicated by the headnotes accompanying each entry, Poems 3284 through 3288 were likely gathered from other poetic collections that no longer exist. They share obvious imagery, from the act of stringing beads along a cord to burying jars of *sake* in the earth. They are also presumed to be prayers for meeting with someone in order to consummate a relationship, thereby categorizing them as *sōmon* poems and more specifically as love songs. The fact that the God-Worshiping Song shares many of the same characteristics as the Volume XIII poems, lends some credence to Omodaka's theory that the God-Worshiping Song is a prayer for the consummation of a love affair.[147] In this interpretation, the sequence is actually an example of a *sōmon* poem, but is categorized as *zōka* only because of the circumstances under which it was composed.

One counterargument to this reading is that there are a number of poems recorded in the *Man'yōshū* which read as if they were *sōmon* but are categorized as either *zōka* or *hiyuka*. While common in *sōmon* poems, the poetic persona of a woman longing to meet with a man is not strictly limited to that category. Therefore, it becomes necessary to think about why the God-Worshiping Song is categorized differently than the poems in Volume XIII that inspired it. Aso

[146] MYS XIII, Poems 3284 – 3288. All the variations in Volume XIII besides Poem 3284 are written in what is presumed to be the voice of a woman. The variant Poem 3286 reads *kimi ni yorite* 君によりて ("when it comes to my lord") instead of *imo ni yorite* 妹によりて ("about that girl, my Little Sister").

[147] Omodaka *Chūshaku* 4, 403.

Mizue modifies Omodaka's interpretation, stating that the poem should be considered as a love song composed during a banquet for the purpose of displaying Sakanoue's literary talents.[148] In her estimation, this is what makes the God-Worshiping Song an example of *zōka* rather than *sōmon*.

Other commentators such as Itō Haku interpret the God-Worshiping Song as a poem composed in remembrance of a recently deceased male relative. Scholars who follow this reading suggest that the "lord" mentioned in the poem is Sakanoue's recently deceased husband and half-brother Sukunamaro, since they were married at one point. This reading explains why the poetic topic of worshiping ancestral gods coincides with the presence of a *kimi*-esque figure who is a lover in many *Man'yō* poems composed by women. Itō Haku's commentary provides a glimpse into the logic behind such theories:

> [The identity] of this "lord" 君 is obscure. At first, it seems to point to an ancestor worshipped as a deity. We can think of this set of poems as a prayer for the clan's prosperity by summoning the ancestral god, [composed] as the *ietōji* who should supervise rituals for the clan gods. However, if on the other hand we look closely at the term "*kimi*" that—when used by a woman—gives off a sense of deep affection, then this poem may have strongly had in mind [Sakanoue's] deceased husband Ōtomo no Sukunamaro, who is connected to the genealogy of the Ōtomo clan from the time of the ancestral gods. The phrase "can I not meet my lord?" seems to strongly confirm [the image] of Sukunamaro within the image of the ancestral god.[149]

As we can see, Itō Haku overlays the image of the clan god upon Sukunamaro. As both husband and familial kin to Sakanoue, Sukunamaro seemingly covers both dimensions of public and private found in the god-worshiping song. As Inoguchi Fumi points out, however, the term *kimi* is not only reserved for lovers and husbands, but can also refer to any man for whom a feminine

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[148] Aso Mizue. *Man'yō wakashi ronkō.* Tokyo: Kasama Shoin (1993), 687.

[149] Itō (1995) Vol. 2, 223. この「君」は難解。直接には祖神を指すのであろう。氏神の祭祀を統轄すべき家刀自として、祖神を招き寄せて一族の栄えを祈ったのがこの歌群だと思われる。しかし、女性からいう「君」という語が一方で放つ親愛感を重く見れば、ここには、祖神以来の大伴氏系譜につながる亡夫宿奈麻呂を強く封じこめたのが、「君に逢はじかも」であろう。

speaker might hold deep regard and affection.[150] In other words, Sakanoue could have also been thinking of her father, Yasumaro, or her other brother, Tabito, when composing the God-Worshiping Song. This is because the last line in both the *chōka* and *hanka*, *kimi ni awaji kamo* ("will I not meet my lord?") implies that it is impossible for her to meet the man for whom she longs as he is no longer alive.

This brings us to the next point of contention in Japanese scholarship, which is Sakanoue's role within Ōtomo clan politics as it relates to the God-Worshiping Song. Most scholarship in both Japanese and English tends to assume that Sakanoue must have been the *de facto* head of the Ōtomo lineage in the interim between Tabito's death and Yakamochi's coming of age. This assumption is based on a number of factors from her management of marriages within the family in the many exchanges recorded in Volume Four, to the suggestion that she was performing acts of worship based on the existence of the God-Worshiping Song.

Aso Mizue, however, provides a substantive amount of historical evidence that contradicts the idea that Sakanoue could have ever led rituals worshiping the Ōtomo ancestral gods. Citing early historical records such as the *Nihon shoki* and *Shoku Nihongi* she demonstrates that as a general rule god worship rituals were conducted by men, and the only clear example of women being in charge of deity worship was in the case of worshiping the sun goddess Amaterasu at the Ise shrine.[151] Generally speaking, a male head of a noble lineage 氏上 (*uji no kami*) was expected to lead rites in worshiping clan gods, meaning that any living male relatives of relatively high-rank at the time of the sequence's composition (733) would have actually been in charge of worship. According to Aso, there were three possible candidates for the role:

[150] Inoguchi Fumi. "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no 'saishinka." *Mibukushi* 88 (2014), 47.

[151] Aso (1993), 683.

Michitari 大伴道足 (d. 741?), Ushikai 大伴牛養 (d. 749), and Emaro 兄麻呂 (dates unknown).[152] Based on such historical evidence, Aso argues that Sakanoue was never in such a position where she would lead the entire Ōtomo lineage in a public capacity let alone in worshiping their ancestral gods.

Although Aso's investigation into how nobles and royals worshiped their gods is valuable for the information it provides, I am not interested in the "truth" behind the poem in terms of their historical accuracy or the identity of the people they mention. Rather, my focus is on the ways in which the paratextual information in the *Man'yōshū* has shaped the commentarial tradition on the God-Worshiping Song. It is clear that elements such as poetic categorization, headnotes and endnotes, intertextual references, as well as the author's own gender along with her body of work, are very influential in our understanding of this poem.

The paratextual element I have rarely seen used in analyzing this poem, however, is its placement within the sequence of poems recorded in Volume III and the historical context surrounding its composition. Furthermore, there is not much discussion about how the God-Worshiping Song functions on a textual level. Considering its distinctive subject matter as a prayer of longing for someone and the circumstances under which it was composed, I will now examine how the God-Worshiping Song fits among other poems, within the structure of Volume III, and as part of a broader depiction of the Ōtomo lineage within the *Man'yōshū*.

The God-Worshiping Song II: Intertextual and Anthological Contexts

The first point I would like to emphasize, however, is that this poem does not belong to the *sōmon* category. Unlike poems 3284 through 3288, which only make generic reference to the

[152] Aso (1993), 672–73.

gods of Heaven and Earth, Sakanoue's God-Worshiping Song specifically refers to the Ōtomo ancestral god, describing their descent from the fields of heaven in which they were born.[153] It then describes the steps the speaker takes in offering her prayer up to the gods one-by-one, which mirrors those older poems. The last three lines, however, stand out within the *chōka*. In the line "*tawayame osuhi torikake*," translated as "I take the stole of a maiden," the *osuhi* refers to a particular piece of garment worn across both shoulders. The word *tawayame* is a term that refers to a specific feminine archetype, either a "graceful" or "weak" woman. Often times this term is contrasted with *masurao,* a masculine figure who is described as brave and strong.

Tawayame is not a term exclusively used to indicate the sex of the author, but rather to indicate a particular feminine archetype. Within the *Man'yōshū* there are about ten poems that contain this term, including the God-Worshiping Song. While most poems that use this term can be categorized as *sōmon* poetry, a handful written by men are categorized as *zōka*. One such example is a part of a sequence by Kasa no Kanamura in Volume VI where he describes longing for *ama* women in vain, as he has no boat or oar to meet them:

大夫之　情者梨荷	I do not possess the heart of a brave man
手弱女乃　念多和美手	Like a weak maiden my thoughts yield and bend
俳徊　吾者衣戀流	Wandering here and there, I am deep in longing
船梶雄名三	Since I have no boat or oar.[154]

The above is only a partial translation, but it demonstrates how speakers can adopt poetic personas even midway through a poem in order to convey a particular mood. Though the author

[153] The god in question is presumably Ame no Oshihi no Mikoto, one of Ninigi no Mikoto's retainers who went with him when he descended to earth to rule at his grandmother Amaterasu's command. For a version of this event, see Yamaguchi Yoshinori and Kōnoshi Takamitsu, eds. *Kojiki*. *SNKBZ* 1. Tōkyō: Shōgakkan (1997), 116–17. Also, see Philippi, Donald. *Kojiki*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (1969), 141, for an English translation of the passage.

[154] Last seven lines of MYS VI, Poem 935.

and speaker are both male,[155] it is clear that the speaker identifies with the feminine persona in order convey a sense of futility, as he does not have the resources to achieve his goal (meeting with the *ama* women). Similarly, Sakanoue uses the figure of the *tawayame* in the God-Worshiping Song as a means to express a futile kind of longing. The action described as "taking the stole of a delicate maiden," implies that Sakanoue's narrator becomes a *tawayame*-esque figure by donning the *osuhi* and performing rituals used to meet with someone as based on the ancient-style songs recorded in Volume XIII. No matter how many rites she performs, however, her wish of meeting with her lord cannot be fulfilled.

Furthermore, though the speaker of the God-Worshiping Song adopts the persona of the *tawayame*, a prototypical heroine in love poetry, the speaker's proclaimed desire or yearning does not have to be romantic in nature. In his discussion of how non-normative desire is expressed in early Chinese poetry, Paul Rouzer states that, as a result of marriage and kinship systems designed to dictate women's roles within the home and normative heterosexual relationships based on marriage,

> …a desire of any kind *that can be spoken of* in any comprehensible way tends to use the marriage model (and its concomitant variants—courtship, seduction, even adultery) to articulate its own existence; if it does not, it remains unspoken, or is represented in some 'non-desiring' way.[156]

In other words, in a society where marriage and kinship systems determine social behavior and activities, all desires expressed in writing by individuals living in that society are subsumed under a marriage model. Similar to poetic practice among the Chinese literati, nobles who could

[155] Kanamura has written poems entirely from a woman's point-of-view and on behalf of a female subject. For an example, see MYS IV, Poem 543. It is also another example of *tawayame.* For an English translation, see Levy (1981), 265–66.

[156] Rouzer, Paul. *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2001), 28.

read and write in early Japan also appear to adopt personas and voices based on idealized models of courtship and marriage to express non-romantic desire or yearning. This is how two poets of different genders such as Kasa no Kanamura and Lady Sakanoue can both utilize the figure of the *tawayame* in expressing their sense of yearning. While Kanamura's expressed desire is clearly more sexual in nature, the context surrounding her poem makes Sakanoue's desire ambiguous. Is it possible to use such a romantic persona to express a non-romantic yearning?

There are no examples within the *Man'yōshū* that can provide intertexual evidence for the interpreting the God-Worshiping Song as non-romantic. There is, however, an example of longing for a departed family relative from another eight-century text. In Poem 126, recorded in the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720), Prince Naka no Ōe 中大兄皇子 (later Emperor Tenchi 天智天皇 [r. 661-72]) sings the following song in grief at the funeral for his mother, Empress Saimei 斉明天皇 (594-661, r. 655-61):

君が目の　恋しきからに	Because of my longing to see your eyes,
泊てて居て　かくや恋ひむも	Though anchored with you, I long for you like this,
君が目を欲り	For I wish to see your eyes.[157]

Commentary about this poem states that the term *kimi* is generally considered to be an honorific term for men used by women and, were it not for the context of Saimei's funeral surrounding the poem, this poem would considered a love poem. This is because the verb *horu* 欲る is normally a word used to express erotic desire. It should be obvious that a prince would not be expressing such a desire at a state-sanctioned event, such as a funeral for his mother the sovereign. Following Rouzer's observation about how marriage and courtship become the framework that

[157] For the original passage in the *Nihon shoki*, see SNKBZ *Nihon shoki* 3, 244–45.

can be used to express desire, in Prince Naka no Ōe's song the rhetoric of longing normally associated with romantic yearning is used to express a sorrowful longing instead.

Given the context surrounding the God-Worshiping Song, where the setting is during a family ceremony as well as an example of a similar poetic voice in Naka no Oe's song, it thus becomes possible to see this poem as an expression of longing in grief rather than longing in desire. Furthermore, the fact that the last line in both the *chōka* and *hanka* contains the phrase *awaji kamo* 逢じかも provides further evidence that this poem is for the deceased. While this particular phrase is the only one of its kind in the entire *Man'yōshū*, a phrase with approximately the same meaning, *awanu kamo* ("we shall not meet"), appears about twelve times. One example is a *banka* written by the Empress Consort Yamatohime when Emperor Tenji is on his deathbed:

> 一書曰近江天皇聖體不豫御病急時太后奉獻御歌一首
> *In a text it says that the Great Consort offered up a poem when, his sacred body having become unwell, the Ōmi sovereign's illness suddenly worsened.*
>
> 青旗乃　木旗能上乎　　Above the hills of Kohata of the green flags,
> 賀欲布跡羽　目尓者雖視　　My eyes can see his spirit coming and going,
> 直尓不相香裳　　But we cannot meet firsthand.[158]

Just as with the God-Worshiping Song, we see that the poem's speaker longs for an absent figure. Though the speaker possesses a strong desire to meet once more with her loved one, it is not enough to overcome death. Poem 148 is also surrounded by other contributions lamenting Emperor Tenchi's death, suggesting that this poem should not just be read as a woman mourning her husband's passing. Rather, it constitutes one part of a section dedicated to the collective mourning of a sovereign whose descendants eventually ascended the throne as well.[159] This

[158] MYS II, Poem 148.

[159] Duthie (2014), 192. According to Duthie, Poem 148 along with the rest of the *banka* from women mourning Tenchi's death were thus compiled as part of a history of mourning.

space in the text is notably occupied by women, showcasing that they had a role in the public, non-romantic space of mourning at least in the text, regardless if the language used in the poetry can be construed as romantic.

Clearly, the God-Worshiping Song was not composed under the same social and historical contexts as Kanamura or Yamatohime's poems. The language and imagery that the speaker uses does suggest that a kind of rhetoric or expression of longing can be used in multiple contexts both inside and beyond love poetry. Kanamura's poem addresses the conflict between his personal desires and his official capacity as a member of an imperial excursion, and Yamatohime's verse serves as the principal voice in a chorus of women mourning the death of their sovereign. What anthological function does Sakanoue's God-Worshiping Song serve, then?

In order to answer this question, we first have to consider the general structure of the *zōka* section in Volume III and the reigns to which it corresponds along with the Ōtomo lineage's representation within that section. As mentioned earlier, Volume III follows what scholars now call the "ancient-modern" format, in that each section of the book opens with a song from a legendary or revered figure, and then progresses throughout the eras starting from Jitō or Monmu's reigns and concludes with poetry dating from Shōmu's tenure as sovereign, considered to be "current" or within the recent past for the book.[160] Notably, there are very few calendrical dates given within the text and, unlike Volumes I and II, there are no section headings announcing the sovereign reign in which these poems were composed. Most scholars cross-reference the events described in some of the headnotes with dates given in the *Nihon shoki* or *Shoku Nihongi* in order to approximate date or imperial era. Still, the volume is generally

[160] The last dated poem in Volume III is the God-Worshiping Song from 733, and the last dated poem in the entire *Man'yōshū* is from 759, one year into the reign of Emperor Junnin 淳仁天皇 (733–765, r. 758–764) and ten years after the end of Shōmu's reign.

organized in a rough linear progression (Jitō to Shōmu). Poems 235 through 305 represent the "ancient" section before the capital moves to Nara in 710, with contributions from imperial princes from both Tenmu and Tenchi's lineages (including Naga and Yuge, and Kasuga and Nagaya respectively), along with lower ranking courtiers such as Hitomaro and Takechi no Kurohito.

Besides Jitō's exchange with a female servant named Shihi, in most of the poems there are no direct interactions between sovereign and subject, though some poems are categorized as a response to imperial command or during a procession.[161] Unlike Volume I, most poems in this section are presented to princes by lower ranking courtiers, written during banquets or processions, or written in contexts of traveling to and from the capital for job postings in other regions. It is as if Volume III's *zōka* section's main focus is on the court and regions surrounding the sovereign and capital rather than the central figure and location themselves.

Within the "ancient" subsection of Poems 235 through 305, there is just one contribution by an Ōtomo lineage member, an unnamed man who achieved the rank of senior counselor. It does not describe a specific location, but rather conveys the traveler's emotions when encountering a beautiful sight in nature:

> 大納言大伴卿歌一首　未詳
> *A poem by the Senior Counselor Lord Ōtomo*　*unidentified*
>
> 奥山之（おくやまの）　菅葉凌（すがのはしのぎ）　Pushing down on sedge leaves in the hidden mountains,
> 零雪乃（ふるゆきの）　消者将惜（けなばをしけむ）　If that fallen snow melts, it would be a pity.
> 雨莫零行年（あめなふりそね）　Oh, rain, please do not come down![162]

[161] Examples include Poems 245 and 246 by Prince Nagata on his way to Tsukushi and Lord Isonokami's Poem 287 during a procession to Shiga.

[162] MYS III, Poem 299.

As indicated by the headnote to Poem 299, the Ōtomo counselor's identity was a mystery even to later audiences and possibly the compilers. Keichū's highly influential *Man'yō daishōki* 万葉代匠記 (1687–1690) claims the author is Sakanoue's elder brother, Tabito, who did eventually achieve the rank of *dainagon.* Omodaka Hisataka, on the other hand, thinks this is an error since Tabito is referred to as a middle counselor 中納言 (*chūnagon*) in the headnote to Poems 315 and 316, and that it refers to his father Yasumaro, who achieved the rank of *senior counselor* by the time of his death in 714.[163] I agree with Omodaka's assessment that the author is likely Yasumaro given that the section's structure starts with a section of poetry before the capital moved to Nara in 710 and the fact that there are no poems by Tabito recorded in the *Man'yōshū* before Shōmu's reign, considered to be the "modern era" in Volume III. Poem 299 can also be considered an "ancient" example of poetry by the Ōtomo lineage. Its inclusion in the first subsection of Volume III's *zōka* poetry establishes the Ōtomo presence in imperial history as high-ranking members of Jitō and Monmu's courts and supporters of the Tenmu dynastic line.

The second subsection (Poems 306 through 327) shifts into the "modern" era of poetry within Volume III and includes compositions from imperial princes such as Prince Aki and Prince Kadobe, to other members such as Tori no Senryō and Yamabe no Akahito.[164] Many of these figures are literal or metaphorical descendants of poets from the previous generation, many of their compositions also addressing the sights seen and emotions felt during official and personal travel to and from the capital. Members of the Fujiwara lineage are also introduced in

[163] See Page 187 in Omodaka 3 for his entire argument.

[164] Prince Aki was one of Prince Shiki's grandsons and married to Lady Ki 紀郎女, one of Yakamochi's recurring poetic correspondents. Prince Kadobe was a descendant of Prince Naga and eventually became a commoner. Tori no Senryō is believed to have been one of Emperor Shōmu's tutors and Yamabe no Akahito seems to have occupied a similar position to Hitomaro and Takechi no Kurohito as an official court poet during the mid-eighth century. For information in English, see their entries in Cranston (1993).

this subsection, with the inclusion of a poem composed by Fujiwara no Umakai 藤原宇合 (694 – 737) during the Naniwa palace's construction.[165] Finally, Tabito's first poem recorded in the *Man'yōshū* is found in this subsection, a *chōka* and *hanka* set composed in response to imperial command during a procession to Yoshino:

> 暮春之月幸芳野離宮時中納言大伴卿奉勅作歌一首 并短歌 未逕奏上歌
> *A poem offered up by the middle counselor Lord Ōtomo in response to imperial command during the procession to the detached palace at Yoshino in the third month of Spring*
>
> *With* tanka. *A poem not yet presented to the throne*

見吉野之　芳野乃宮者	In fair Yoshino, the palace of Yoshino—
山可良志　貴有師	Because of its mountains, it is majestic.
水可良思　清有師	Because of its rivers, it is pure and bright.
天地与　長久	Long and enduring along with Heaven and Earth,
萬代尓　不改将有	For ten thousand ages, it will remain unchanged
行幸之宮	Palace of our lord's procession.

> 反歌
> *Envoy*

昔見之　象乃小河乎	The brook of Kisa at which I gazed long ago,
今見者　弥清	When I look at it now, the stream has become
成尓来鴨	All the more bright and clear![166]

Based on cross-referential information from the *Shoku Nihongi*, Tabito's poem above seems to have been composed during a procession to Yoshino following Prince Obito's accession to the imperial throne in 724.[167] The subject of the poem, Yoshino, is a significant location in the

[165] MYS III, Poem 312. Fujiwara no Umakai was Fuhito's third eldest son and the founder of the *shikike* 式家 branch. He perished along with his three brothers (Muchimaro, Fusasaki, and Maro) during the smallpox epidemic of 737. See Aoki Kazuo, et. al., *Shoku Nihongi Vol. 2* SNKBT (1990), 320–25. and Naoki and Bock (1993), 250–51.

[166] MYS III, Poems 315 and 316.

[167] See SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 146–47.

mythos of Emperor Tenmu and his dynastic line, as it was the point of departure for the Jinshin War of 672, in which he defeated Emperor Tenchi's son Prince Ōtomo 大友皇子 (648–672).[168] As the first male sovereign from Tenmu's line since Monmu, this excursion by Prince Obito (later Emperor Shōmu) surely reinforced the legitimacy and legacy of Tenmu's dynastic line. Included in the headnote is an odd piece of information: apparently Tabito did not present this sequence at the time of its composition. Regardless of whether it was recited during the event itself, this poetic sequence is enshrined in Volume III as a poem meant to represent this momentous occasion for the court, with Tabito becoming the spokesperson who exalts both Yoshino and the new sovereign. The inclusion of Tabito's poems also solidifies the Ōtomo lineage's loyalty to the imperial household, and in particular Emperor Tenmu's dynastic line.

The rest of the poems in the second subsection contain more poetry on travel, but then the third subsection (Poems 328 through 351) focuses on poems coming out of Dazaifu during Tabito's tenure as Governor-General 帥 between 728 and 730. The subsection starts with Tabito and his subordinates, Ono no Oyu 小野老 (d. 737) and Ōtomo no Yotsuna 大伴四綱 (dates unknown) longing to return to the capital of Nara,[169] and Tabito even references the stream at Kisa once more:

吾命毛 常有奴可	I wonder if my life could not last forever
昔見之 象小河乎	In order to go and see that brook at Kisa
行見為	At which I gazed long ago.[170]

[168] For more on the significance of Yoshino to Emperor Tenmu and Empress Jitō, as well as its portrayal in the *Man'yōshū*, see Duthie (2014) Chapter Seven: "Tenmu and the Yoshino Cult," 243–74.

[169] MYS III, Poems 328–335. See Cranston (1993), 558–60, for an English translation.

[170] MYS III, Poem 332.

The overlapping imagery between the above poem and Poems 315 and 316 composed at Yoshino reinforce an image of Tabito as loyal subject wishing to return and witness the majesty of his and the imperial ancestral lands. After this poem, Tabito's figure becomes more insular as he turns to extolling the virtues of drinking wine in Poems 338 through 350.[171] He then disappears from the *zōka* section in Volume III, only reappearing toward the end in the *banka* section.

Poems 352 through 378 constitute the fourth subsection, which sees a return to poets based in the capital. Figures such as Akahito and Prince Kadobe return, along with the introduction of Kasa no Kanamura and Prince Yuhara, another son of Prince Shiki who has a number of entries spread between Volumes Three and Four. This subsection ends with a poem composed by Akahito upon seeing the late Fujiwara no Fuhito's garden:

> 山部宿祢赤人詠故太政大臣藤原家之山池歌一首
> *A poem composed by Yamabe no sukune Akahito about the pond at the late Grand Minister Fujiwara's home*
>
> 昔者之　舊堤者　(いにしへの　ふるきつつみは)　This old embankment from ancient days long ago
> 年深　池之瀲尓　(としふかみ　いけのなぎさに)　As the years deepen, the edge of the pond becomes
> 水草生尓家里　(みくさおひにけり)　Overgrown with waterweeds.[172]

As pointed out by Itō Haku in his commentary, Akahito probably composed this poem on the anniversary of Fuhito's death as a prayer for his departed spirt, though the year is unclear.[173] The speaker of this poem certainly appears to mourn the passage of time and that a more glorious stage as long gone, with its description of the garden's state of disarray. The poem also, however, serves as a memorialization for one of the court's most influential statesmen who supported Emperor Monmu's accession, and maternal grandfather of the current sovereign.

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[171] For an explanation and translation in English, see Cranston (1993), 333–37.

[172] MYS III, Poem 378.

[173] Itō 2 (1996), 220.

The poem that follows Akahito's Poem 378 is none other than the God-Worshiping Song, which begins the fifth and final subsection of the *zōka* entries (Poems 379 through 389). Obviously, the contents of Akahito's poem share nothing in common with the God-Worshiping Song. The placement of the entries right next to one another, however, does suggest that the "lord" for whom the poem's speaker prays could refer to male members of the Ōtomo lineage. Considering the bulk of Ōtomo representation in Volume III up to Poems 379 and 380 comes from either Yasumaro or Tabito and his inner circle at Dazaifu, I am inclined to agree with Inoguchi's assessment that this poem can be interpreted as a prayer for the any of the deceased male members from the Saho Major Counselor's branch.[174] Though Tabito did not hold the same political power as Fuhito at his zenith, the poems together serve as a means of memorializing both noble lineages in the text. Fuhito as a great statesman is remembered through a contribution from a revered court poet, and the Ōtomo lineage, particularly Yasumaro's household, is honored by one of the most gifted poets that belonged to it.

Furthermore, the poem that follows right after the God-Worshiping Song is a prayer for safe travels from a female entertainer named Koshima. A recurring character in the Ōtomo subplot of Volumes III and VI, her poems are either addressed to Tabito himself or (as in the case below), the paratext makes clear associations with his Dazaifu circle by mentioning that she is from Tsukushi (Kyūshū):

筑紫娘子贈行旅歌一首　娘子字曰兒嶋
A poem sent to a traveler by a maiden from Tsukushi *The maiden's name was Koshima*

思家登(いへおもふと)　情進莫(こころすすむな)	When longing for home, do not hurry that heart!
風候(かざまもり)　好為而伊麻世(よくしていませ)	Observe the wind patterns well and be careful,
荒其路(あらしそのみち)	For they are rough, those sea routes.[175]

[174] See Inoguchi (2014), 47–8.

[175] MYS III, Poem 381.

Given that the only other appearance by Koshima involves Tabito (a record of her correspondence with Tabito is included in Volume VI when he leaves to return the capital before shortly passing away in 731), the traveler she addresses above is likely him or a member of his retinue.[176] This creates a chronological conundrum in the arrangement of poems, however, as Koshima's poem likely predates Sakanoue's God-Worshiping Song, which is recorded as having been composed in 733, two years after Tabito's death.

Though not a definitive explanation, there are three reasons for the God-Worshiping song's prior placement to Koshima's entry. The first reason is that it provides an easier transition between Akahito's Poem 378 and the final subsection. The second reason might have to do with rank, and Sakanoue as a noblewoman outranks an entertainer like Koshima. The third reason is part of a general theory about the last eleven entries in Volume III's *zōka* section. Namely, that Sakanoue herself possessed these poems and gave them to Yakamochi for inclusion in Volume III.[177] This theory is somewhat plausible, as the rest of the entries in the final subsection, including a poem by Akahito that reads as if it belongs in the *hiyuka* section instead, appear detached from the rest of Volume III's *zōka* section. Such a theory would explain the considerable amount of detail included in the endnote to the God-Worshiping Song as compared to other *zōka* as well.

While it is impossible to confirm whether Sakanoue was involved in the inclusion of these poems as an editor, such a theory provides reasoning for Sakanoue and Koshima's presence in a poetic category where women are gradually disappearing from textual view. Even if she was not leading the entire lineage in clan worship, Sakanoue would have been a major

[176] MYS VI, Poems 965–68. For an English translation, see Cranston (1993), 561–63.

[177] For a mention of this theory, see Itō *Shakuchū* 2, 232.

presence at a banquet or celebratory event surrounding the rituals as one of Yasumaro's oldest living descendants in 733.[178] The God-Worshiping Song, then, establishes the image of Sakanoue as an important member of the Saho household, continuing the family's literary legacy following the appearance and disappearance of the Saho patriarch, Yasumaro, and his eldest son Tabito from the text.

By deliberately referencing older verse collected in Volume XIII, the God-Worshiping Song provides evidence for Sakanoue's poetic knowledge and demonstrates a transitional phase in poetic practice. These modern compositions to which the song belongs differ from the ancient style in that they are shorter in length, are not explicitly about the sovereign, and their contexts are either unspecified or in intimate settings such as private banquets. Even the subsection dedicated to "ancient-style" poems in Volume Three does not nearly have as many public settings as in Volume One. This observation is made not as a judgment about the quality of the poems, but rather to point out an obvious trend in poetic composition as provided by the text. To judge the God-Worshiping Song as inferior to any of its predecessors in the *sōmon* or *zōka* categories is to resort to a misplaced, anachronistic form of nostalgia, ignoring the simple fact that tastes and trends in artistic practice change over time.

The God-Worshiping Song also updates the topic of praying for loved ones by transforming the generic gods from the "original" Volume XIII poems into a clan deity, thereby personalizing the song and bringing focus to the Ōtomo lineage within the text. While continuing the story of the Ōtomo after Tabito's death and honoring him along the way, the poetic sequence demonstrates Sakanoue's poetic prowess, and that of the Ōtomo lineage by proxy. Aso mentions later in her first chapter on Sakanoue that the only people who recognized her skills as a poet

[178] Tanushi and Sukunamaro's birth and death years are unknown, though most scholars seem to think that at least Sukunamaro was dead by this time.

were members of her family, because women could not perform the same public roles under the new *ritsuryō* system as predecessors such as Princess Nukata did.[179] That may be the case for Sakanoue's social circumstances at the time, but the enshrinement of the God-Worshiping Song in the text of Volume III ensures that future generations of readers know her as a poet who wrote compositions in a variety of modes alongside that of her public-facing male peers.

Woman as Writer and Metaphor: Volume III's *Hiyuka*

Sakanoue's image as guardian of the Ōtomo family legacy continues into the next section of Volume III labeled *hiyuka* or "allegorical poems." This is a new poetic category sequentially introduced in the text of the *Man'yōshū*, though it appears again in Volumes VII, XI, XIII, and XIV. Defining *hiyuka* and its relationship to other poetic categories has been the subject of some discussion over the years. Most descriptions of *hiyuka* define it as a particular subdivision under the category of *sōmon* poetry that uses metaphor to describe feelings of love or longing in an approach reminiscent of *kibutsu chinshi* 奇物陳思, or "expressing thoughts by means of things."[180] As Omodaka points out, however, subsuming *hiyuka* under the *sōmon* category is an oversimplification of the genre, given that there are *hiyuka* poems included in Volume X's *zōka* section, and there is an entirely separate section devoted to poetry of this type in Volume XIII.[181] Rather than considering *hiyuka* as a subcategory of either *sōmon* or *zōka*, it is better to think of it as a mode of expression that can be applied broadly.

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[179] Aso (1993), 693.

[180] *Kibutsu chinshi* is one of two rubrics used to differentiate different forms of expression in *sōmon* poetry. The other is called *seijutsu shinsho* 正述心緒, or "expressing feelings directly." For a definition of these terms in Japanese, see Kōnoshi, ed. (2002), 114. For translations of these terms along with some information in English, see Shirane, et. al., eds. (2016), 54.

[181] Omodaka 3, 433.

The question remains, however, about whether *hiyuka* can be read with the same political angle as that of *zōka* or *banka*. In an exploration of the category as it is represented in the *Man'yōshū,* Angela Yiu outlines their differences with metaphorical poems as used in Sinitic poetry. Her main point is that the term "metaphor" 譬喩 (J. *hiyu*, C. *piyu*) is ultimately a misnomer as *hiyu* when used to describe Japanese vernacular poetry does not carry the same political dimensions as *piyu* does for Sinitic poetry commentaries in establishing a "morally edifying" category.[182] I agree with Yiu's argument that *hiyuka* are not political in the same way as *piyu* given their different exegetical traditions, but I also think there can be a political reading of Volume III's *hiyuka* given the paratext and authors represented.[183] The fact that only certain lineages or particular members who had political or familial ties to the final compiler were included in this section cannot be ignored in terms of their social and political implications.

All things considered, Volume III has a *hiyuka* section separate from the *zōka* and *banka* categories, and not as part of the *sōmon* poems collated in Volume IV. With twenty-five poems, it is the smallest of all categories represented between these two books that utilize the "ancient-modern" format and contains only examples of *tanka* poetry. In terms of authorial representation by gender, the *hiyuka* section sees the highest ratio of women represented as compared to men, with four out of thirteen named authors identified as female:

	Reign & Time Periods Covered	Number of Named Poets (# of Women)	Identifiable Women	Topics or Settings Mentioned
Volume III, *hiyuka* section	One example likely from second half of seventh century (Tenmu or	13 (4)	Princess Ki, Lady Kasa, Lady Sakanoue, a female	Ducks as metaphor for romantic jealousy, correspondence

[182] Yiu, Angela. "The Category of Metaphorical Poems (*Hiyuka*) in the *Man'yōshū*: Its Characteristics and Chinese Origins." *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 24, no. 1 (1990), 20.

[183] Ibid., 13. Yiu even acknowledges that a historical reading of Volume III's *hiyuka* is possible given this information.

	Jitō), the rest likely from around Jinki (724–729) and Tenpyō (729–749) eras (Shōmu)		correspondent to Saeki no Akamaro	with paramour on longing or rejection, family banquet poem on the topic of romantic rivalry, Orange tree as metaphor for a child

Along with the high ratio of men to women, this section begins in a similar manner to Volume IV's opening with an entry composed by a woman. The composition chosen for this honor is one by Princess Ki 紀皇女 (dates unknown), one of Emperor Tenmu's daughters. This contrasts with the opening songs of the *zōka* and *banka* sections by Hitomaro and Prince Shōtoku (574–622). This parallel between Volume III's *hiyuka* section and Volume IV's opening songs provides scholars with textual support of associating *hiyuka* and *sōmon*, and women by proxy due to their strong association with the latter category. Furthermore, these poems are extended metaphors for longing, romantic or otherwise, and many of them are contextualized as correspondences between members of the court. Just as with the *sōmon* of Volume IV, however, these poems are not devoid of politics. On the contrary, they reveal relationships between certain members of the court that would otherwise be hidden from history.

The particular history to which the *hiyuka* section of Volume III is devoted is that of the Ōtomo family and their associates, as the majority of contributions to this section come from members of either Tabito, Sakanoue, or Yakamochi's circles. Even the author of the opening poem, Princess Ki, is connected to the lineage through her full brother Prince Hozumi's marriage to Sakanoue.[184] Following her entry, the *hiyuka* section moves into the "modern" era of Shōmu's

[184] See the endnote for MYS IV, Poems 525–28 for information this topic on pages 37–38.

reign and examples of poetry from Tabito's circle at Dazaifu. The authors mentioned include the Manzei Priest, Ōtomo no Momoyo, and Tabito's servant, Yo no Myōgun. There is no contribution from Tabito, however. The section then alternates between people associated with Yakamochi or Sakanoue with appearances from figures such as Lady Kasa (one of Yakamochi's early paramours), Fujiwara no Yatsuka 藤原八束 (715–766),[185] and Saeki no Akamaro 佐伯赤麻呂 (dates unknown).[186] There is very little information provided in the headnotes for each of the twenty-five poems and no endnotes included at all. What little can be gleaned from the paratext suggests that most of these poems were either composed during banquets conducted in intimate settings, such as a marriage ceremony or a celebration between clan members, or as correspondences between people.

Though men still outnumber women when it comes to authorship, women arguably are the main subject of interest for many songs in the *hiyuka* section, including Sakanoue's contributions. In fact, the focal point in this section of Volume III concerns the courtship of Sakanoue's daughters by Surugamaro and Yakamochi. Ten out of the twenty-five poems are composed by either of the three aforementioned authors, and all are either about or can be interpreted as referring to the Elder Daughter or Younger Daughter of Sakanoue. The *hiyuka* section highlights their desirability as wives with men portrayed as ardent suitors, but also establishes their mother Sakanoue as both matriarch and gatekeeper, facilitating events while testing the daughters' would-be suitors through poetry. In what follows I explore how the Ōtomo

[185] Yatsuka was the third son of Fusasaki, founder of the Northern Branch of the Fujiwara household. Recognizing his abilities, Emperor Shōmu quickly promoted Yatsuka through the ranks. Apparently, he was so intelligent that he incurred the envy of his cousin Fujiwara no Nakamaro. Yatsuka would later receive the name of Matate 真楯 in 760. See Aoki et. al., eds., Vol. 4 (1989), 112–15, for more information.

[186] While Akamaro's personal origins are unknown, the Saeki clan shared a common divine ancestor with the Ōtomo. This made them cousin lineages, so to speak, and it is assumed Akamaro must have known Yakamochi.

lineage's depiction in this section, with Sakanoue and her daughters at the center, contains a political dimension related to the family's standing in the court after the Prince Nagaya Incident in 728 and Tabito's death in 731.

Sakanoue's first entry in the *hiyuka* section is contextualized in one of the most rare settings mentioned in the *Man'yōshū*: a banquet with relatives 親族の宴.[187] As I noted earlier, it seems that women gradually disappeared from literary participation in public banquets by the middle of the eighth century. The following entry from Sakanoue, then, provides the reader with a glimpse into settings where women such as Sakanoue could still participate in literary and social activities such as poetic composition in a familial forum. It is yet another exchange with fellow clan member Surugamaro:

> 大伴坂上郎女宴親族之日吟歌一首
> *A poem Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue recited on a day when she held a banquet with her relatives*
>
> 山守之　有家留不知尓　Since I did not know the mountain had a guardian,
> 其山尓　標結立而　I staked it out and cordoned it off with rope—
> 結之辱為都　An act that fills me with shame!
>
> 大伴宿祢駿河麻呂即和歌一首
> *A poem immediately in response by Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro*
>
> 山主者　盖雖有　Even if there is any mountain guardian,
> 吾妹子之　将結標乎　Who would unfasten the rope used by my sister
> 人将解八方　To wrap around the mountain?[188]

Sakanoue begins the sequence by singing a poem, and Surugamaro follows up with a song of his

[187] There are only two examples of poetry composed during a private banquet with family 親族 (*shinzoku*), Poem 401 in Volume III and Poem 995 in Volume VI. Both are authored by Sakanoue.

[188] MYS III, Poems 401–2.

own, creating a call-and-response effect to the sequence. In this exchange, the speaker in Sakanoue's poem has apparently done something shameful in staking out a mountain and claiming it as their own. The speaker in Surugamaro's poem attempts to assuage their anxieties in stating that no one would refute their claim to the mountain.

On first glance, the topic of the poems appears to be about Sakanoue's reluctance to give away one of her daughters in marriage. Much of this interpretation relies heavily on the context of Volume III's *hiyuka* section, however, in that Surugamaro's other poems discuss a determination to lay claim to a young woman. The poem that immediately proceeds Sakanoue and Surugamaro's call and response is a lone poem authored by the latter on the subject of the plum blossom:

> 大伴宿祢駿河麻呂梅歌一首
> *A poem on the plum blossom by Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro*
>
> 梅花　開而落去登　　There are those who say that plum blossoms will bloom
> 人者雖云　吾標結之　　And scatter thoroughly, but not so from the branch
> 枝将有八方　　To which I have tied a mark.[189]

In this poem, Surugamaro is confident in claiming success of tying his own mark to a branch wheen usually flowers will not stay. With such a poem as the above recorded before the exchange at the clan banquet, ths speaker in Sakanoue's poem can be interpeted as warding off the young man's advance.[190] In doing so, she protects the mountain (or daughter) that belongs to her. Surugamaro's poem in reply, then, becomes an acknowledgment of Sakanoue's position as guardian of her child and creates a means of appeasing her.

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[189] MYS III, Poem 400.

[190] If we assume that Surugamaro was born around the same time as Yakamochi (roughly 718) or slightly before, and that these poems were likely recited after Tabito's death in 731, this would make him in his late teens or early twenties. Onodera Seiko surmises that Surugamaro is probably twenty-five years old at the time of this banquet. (Onodera [1993], 124)

In order to adopt such an interpretation, we have to assume that the speaker in Sakanoue's song is a woman. As pointed out by scholars such as Higashi Shigemi and Itō Haku, the *yamamori* 山守 or mountain guardian is an image traditionally associated with men, and competition with another for someone's hand in marriage is seen as a form of masculine rivalry. Since Poem 401 can be read as someone not realizing that the mountain already had a protector, a metaphor for a young woman already having a suitor, Sakanoue arguably sings from a man's viewpoint according to Higashi.[191] Itō also advocates for a similar interpretation, stating that Sakanoue recites a poem in the voice of a man and likens Surugamaro to a woman who already has a husband in order to ensure that he takes good care of the Younger Daughter whom he later marries according to the headnote for Poem 407.[192] Onodera Seiko acknowledges that the figure of the *yamamori* is usually male, but thinks that the figure is meant to represent another wife, since it was probable that Surugamaro might already have a wife.[193] Though the term *waga imo* 我妹 ("Little Sister") used to refer to Sakanoue in Surugamaro's reply makes the exchange conventional in retrospect, Sakanoue's poem on its own occupies an ambiguous space in term of the poetic speaker. Perhaps it is related to the author's position within anthological and social contexts as initiator of poetic performance at a private banquet and as a focal point for the *hiyuka* section of Volume III.

In addition, Sakanoue and Surugamaro's exchange at a clan banquet alludes to a larger historical and political context concerning private drinking parties during the eighth century. In his analysis of Poem 401, Yoshino Yū mentions the historical and political significance of private

[191] Higashi Shigemi "Kikyō ato – shōgai." In Nakanishi Susumu, ed. *Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume: hito to sakuhin*. Tokyo: Ōfū (1999), 107 – 108.

[192] Itō (1996) Vol. 3, 253.

[193] Onodera (1993), 124.

drinking parties among the aristocracy. These events were not only sites for activities involving poetic composition, but also became spaces where nobles often conspired with each other. This happened with such frequency that Empress Kōken 孝謙天皇 (718–770, r. 749–758) eventually issued an edict banning such events.[194] This indicates that the setting of informal family banquets could also be places where various members of a noble lineage jockey for position amongst themselves and within the broader environment of the court. Taking the historical significance of these banquets into consideration, Yoshino then focuses on the meaning of the phrase *yuhi no haji shitsu* 結の辱しつ, translated here as "an act that fills me with shame." He postulates that the phrase could refer to not just Sakanoue's personal shame, but a joint sense of shame within the Ōtomo lineage.[195] The source of shame or embarassment is not made entirely clear in Yoshino's article, but it most likely has to do with the lineage's decline within the Yamato court following the Prince Nagaya Incident in 728 and the rise of the Fujiwara brothers' faction during the early 730s. Yoshino also points out Sakanoue's special relationship with Yakamochi within the text of the *Man'yōshū*, and says that Sakanoue's perspective as presented is essentially Yakamochi's.[196] While I am reluctant to view Sakanoue as a simple mouthpiece for Yakamochi's personal thoughts and political ambitions, how Sakanoue appears before readers was more than likely mediated through Yakamochi's compiling hand.

What this means, then, is that Poems 401 and 402, an exchange between Sakanoue and Surugamaro, can be interpreted on multiple, interconnected layers. On the one hand, there is the

[194] Aoki et. al., eds. *Shoku Nihongi* SNKBT Vol. 3 (1989), 246–47.

[195] Yoshino Yū. "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no baai—'yui no haji' kō." *Nihon bungaku* 5, no. 1 (1956), 39–43.

[196] Ibid.

conventional historical reading of the poems as relating to Surugamaro's courtship with the Younger Daughter of Sakanoue and her mother's anxiety over the possibility of a rival. This serves a representation of interpersonal drama between representatives of Miyuki and Yasumaro's branches within the lineage. As pointed out by Yoshino, within this exchange Sakanoue is framed as a type of *ietoji* who is respected within the Ōtomo household.[197] This then leads to the second interpretation of their exchange as one meant to portray not only the tight-knit relationship among the Ōtomo, but also their literary acumen as a group.

Finally, considering the negative association between private drinking parties and political conspiracy in the eighth century, we have to wonder if this exchange—one of two described as composed in such a context within the entire anthology—was included either because of Sakanoue's close relationship with the compiler, or because it could be read as devoid of political meaning, or both. In this case, Sakanoue's association with the setting of the family banquet serves as a means of neutralizing or masking any sinister implications. Not only is Sakanoue then a figure meant to rehabilitate fellow kinsmen such as Surugamaro who eventually was accused of conspiracy during Tachibana no Naramaro's Rebellion, but her presence in certain settings also serves to render the space neutral, or at least not overtly political. Poems 401 and 402 also continue the trend of positioning Sakanoue at the center of activity among the Ōtomo as established in the paratext surrounding the God-Worshiping Song in the *zōka* section of Volume III.

Sakanoue's central position is reinforced even in poems that do not directly involve her. After her exchange with Surugamaro at a banquet are a series of poems sent to her daughter's by Yakamochi and Surugamaro. The first poem is addressed to the Elder Daughter by Sakanoue, in

[197] Ibid. 39.

which he likens her to a precious jewel:

大伴宿祢家持贈同坂上家之大嬢歌一首
A poem Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi sent to the elder daughter of the same Sakanoue household.

朝尓食尓　欲見　Every morning and day I want to see it,
其玉乎　如何為鴨　But what can I do in order to keep that jewel
従手不離有牟　Never leaving from my hands?[198]

The following three poems appear in succession after a brief interlude with an exchange between Saeki no Akamaro and a maiden. While the focus is primarily on Surugamaro's marrige to the Younger Daughter of Sakanoue, a representation of Yakamochi's courtship with the Elder Daughter is still inserted in between:

大伴宿祢駿河麻呂娉同坂上家之二嬢歌一首
A poem from when Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro married the younger daughter of the same Sakanoue household.

春霞　春日里之　In Kasuga of the spring mists, it is said that
殖子水葱　苗有跡云師　The small leek planted there is still a seedling.
柄者指尓家牟　Have the leaves already grown?[199]

大伴宿祢家持贈同坂上家之大嬢歌一首
A poem Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi sent to the elder daughter of the same Sakanoue household.

石竹之　其花尓毛我　I wish you were a flower like the fringed pink.
朝旦　手取持而　Every morning I would take you in my hand,
不戀日将無　And no day would I not cherish you.[200]

大伴宿祢駿河麻呂歌一首
A poem by Ōtomo no sukune Surugamaro

[198] MYS III, Poem 403.

[199] MYS III, Poem 407.

[200] MYS III, Poem 408.

一日尓波　千重浪敷尓　　Though my longing surges in a single day like
雖念　奈何其玉之　　A thousand-fold wave, how is it so difficult
手二巻難寸　　To wrap that jewel around my wrist?[201]

Along with Surugamaro's Poem 403, Poems 407, 408, and 409 continue to portray the next generation of men from the Ōtomo lineage as young men full of longing. With proclamations of devotion to the objects of their affection, Surugamaro and Yakamochi embody prototypical romantic protagonists just as they do in Volume IV. Rather than spread out over the course of a scroll of poetry, these portrayals are concentrated in one section of Volume III. In addition, the repeated mention of these women as daughters from the "same Sakanoue household" 同坂上家 in the headnotes before each poem also implicitly brings attention to their mother. This kind of label is rare within the *hiyuka* section. Furthermore, the only other woman given a name or moniker of any sort is Lady Kasa for Poems 395 through 397.[202] The reason why she is given any sort of name or association is because she was one of Yakamochi's lovers. Though many of the contributions from male poets such as the Manzei Priest, Yō no Myōgun, Fujiwara no Yatsuka, and Prince Ichihara can be interpreted as poems about longing for women, none of their headnotes refer to any female recipient by either name or household.

It is for the reasons outlined above that Volume III's *hiyuka* section can and often is interpreted as a section added at a later date by someone associated with the Ōtomo lineage, namely Yakamochi.[203] Looking at the section in its entirety, it is patently obvious that the compiler, whoever they might have been, wanted to place the focus on Lady Sakanoue and her

[201] MYS III, Poem 409.

[202] For an English translation of these poems, see Levy (1980) 205 – 206, and Cranston (1993), 426 – 427.

[203] Ito *Shakuchū* 2, 271.

daughters. The section establishes Lady Sakanoue's powerful role within her family and the lineage as a whole, since her daughters' names derive from her own. The decision to focus on representations of the daughters' courtships by men who would likely become leaders of their clan illustrates their desirability as partners. Like a fringed pink, small leek, or precious jewel, the Elder and Younger Daughters of Sakanoue are worthy of being loved and treasured, and it will also consolidate power within the Ōtomo lineage to a select few branches, and namely that of Yasumaro's descendents.

Yet the *hiyuka* section also establishes their mother as someone who must also be reassured about the futures of both her children and that of the lineage by extension. The last exchange that includes Sakanoue occurs between her and an unknown figure, labeled as Poems 410 and 411:

> 大伴坂上郎女橘歌一首
> *A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue on the orange tree*
>
> 橘乎 屋前尓殖生 (たちばなを やどにゑおほし) — Orange tree that I planted and nurtured by my house,
> 立而居而 後雖悔 (たちてゐて のちにくゆとも) — Even if I rise up and sit down after in worry,
> 驗将有八方 (しるしあらめやも) — Will there be any point in it?
>
> 和歌一首
> *A poem in response*
>
> 吾妹兒之 屋前之橘 (わぎもこが やどのたちばな) — Since the orange tree is planted so close to the home
> 甚近 殖而師故二 (いとちかく うゑてしゆゑに) — Of my dear sister, I cannot give up before
> 不成者不止 (ならずはやまじ) — the tree blossoms and bears fruit.[204]

As the central metaphor in this exchange, what the *tachibana* 橘, or orange tree, and the garden are meant to represent has been the primary question addressed in previous scholarship. The

[204] MYS III, Poems 410 – 411.

answers basically can be reduced to either of two options for each image. The orange tree is meant to represent either a husband or one of her daughters, and the garden refers to either Sakanoue's own garden or that of a man. Kamo no Mabuchi interprets Poem 410 as testing an unspecified man's heart in *Man'yō kō* 万葉考 (1760 – 1788), whereas a line of thinking, beginning with the *Man'yō kō tsuki no ochiba* 万葉考槻落葉 (1788) by Arakida Hisaoyu 荒木田久老 (1747 – 1804), sees the orange tree as about the Younger Daughter being entrusted into the care of Surugamaro.[205] Therefore, the garden refers to his household and not her own. Such debates surrounding this exchange have resulted in different English-language translations as well, highlighting issues in how female poets are perceived in the process.[206]

If we consider the poems that have come before Poems 410 and 411 as pretext for this exchange, then I have to agree with the interpretation of the *tachibana* in question as referring to one of Sakanoue's daughters and the garden as her own. Given the number of poems written by Surugamaro and Yakamochi to her daughters included before this exchange, Sakanoue's Poem 410 can clearly be read from the viewpoint of an anxious mother concerned for her daughter's well-being. As we have seen in the case of Poems 723 and 724 addressed to the Elder Daughter in Volume IV, such a persona is not uncommon for this author.

Surugamaro is a decent guess for the identity of Poem 411's author given that the *hiyuka* sections highlights his courtship of the younger daughter. After all, Surugamaro is the only one between him and Yakamochi who is described by headnotes as "marrying" 娉 the Younger Daughter. In addition, the tenacity exhibited by the speaker of Poem 411 matches Surugamaro's

[205] For a summary of this argument, see Omodaka 3, 481-83.

[206] For an example of an English translation that takes liberties in translation, see Rexroth, Kenneth and Ikuko Atsumi, eds. *The Burning Heart: Women Poets of Japan*. New York: The Seabury Press (1977), 8.

portrayal in other examples such as Poems 407 and 409. The continued comparison between daughters and plants, from the small leek to the orange tree, also supports the theory that this exchange centers on Surugamaro's relationship with the Younger Daughter.

All of the above is ultimately just an educated guess, however. Therefore, I prefer to think of Poem 411 as a disembodied voice meant to represent all men interested in pursuing the hands of Sakanoue's daughters in marriage. As someone who cannot give up before seeing the orange tree bear fruit and blossom in the garden of Sakanoue's house, men such as Surugamaro and Yakamochi as represented in this section continue to ask after the daughters whom she raised. Poem 411 thus becomes a fitting, if ambiguous and ambivalent, conclusion for the "plot" revolving around Sakanoue's daughters in Volume III's *hiyuka* section.

The emotions expressed in Sakanoue's poetry in turn represents what was likely the anxiety mothers from noble lineages felt in giving their daughters away in marriage. While such women likely understood the necessity for such arrangements in securing the future of their children and household, Sakanoue's *hiyuka* poetry in Volume III provides a literary representation of such emotions in early Japan. These poems are not mere affective expressions, however. Rather, *hiyuka* as presented in Volume III represent the interpersonal dynamics of certain lineages in the Yamato court, especially between Sakanoue's personal household and that of the male descendants of Yasumaro and (probably) Miyuki. In establishing relationships with these two important branches through the inclusion of their poetic exchanges, the compiler sets Sakanoue up as a central figure within the power structure of the Ōtomo lineage. Tabito's absence from the *hiyuka* section along with the inclusion of Yakamochi's first entries in Volume III, written from the viewpoint of a young man in pursuit of romance, further strengthen the image of Sakanoue as a *de facto* leader and guardian of the clan's future as first set up in the

God-Worshiping Song from the *zōka* section. The final *banka* section of Volume III continues to portray Sakanoue in such a manner, but also places her alongside some of the *Man'yōshū*'s most celebrated poets.

An Elegy for the Nun Named Rigan

Poems 460 and 461, which will be referred to from here on as the Rigan Elegy, are noted not only for being Lady Sakanoue's longest poetic sequence, but also the longest for any female poet recorded in the *Man'yōshū*. These poems are situated toward the end of the Volume III *banka* section. Compared to other examples of *banka*, the Rigan Elegy has much more extensive headnotes and endnotes, a continuing trend for Sakanoue after her contributions to all other sections of the *Man'yōshū*. As gleaned from these paratextual elements, the poems were originally composed in 735 following the death of a nun named Rigan who stayed with the Ōtomo family at the Saho residence for an unspecified number of years after immigrating to the Japanese archipelago from the Korean Peninsula:

> 七年乙亥大伴坂上郎女悲歎尼理願死去作歌一首　并短歌
> *In the seventh year, Wood Swine* [735], *Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue*, *grieving the death of the nun Rigan, composed one poem with* tanka.

栲角乃　新羅國従 (たくづのの　しらきのくにゆ)	From Silla, the country of the white bark-fiber ropes,
人事乎　吉跡所聞而 (ひとごとを　よしときかして)	Hearing the fair words others spoke of this land,
問放流　親族兄弟 (とひさくる　うがらはらがら)	To a country where there were no kin with whom
無國尓　渡来座而 (なきくにに　わたりきまして)	To confide and share she crossed the sea and came,
大皇之　敷座國尓 (おほきみの　しきますくにに)	And though in this land over which our great lord's rule spreads
内日指　京思美弥尓 (うちひさす　みやこしみみに)	In the capital that flashes in the sun
里家者　左波尓雖在 (さといへは　さはにあれども)	Homes in which to live are packed together and many,
何方尓　念鶏目鴨 (いかさまに　おもひけめかも)	Indeed, what was it that she might have been thinking?
都礼毛奈吉　佐保乃山邊尓 (つれもなき　さほのやまへに)	Like a crying child yearning for her parents, she came

なくこなす　したひきまして
哭兒成　慕来座而　To the hills of Saho where she held no former ties,
しきたへの　いへをもつくり
布細乃　宅乎毛造　And she built a house with a bed of white-bark cloth,
あらたまの　としのをながく
荒玉乃　年緒長久　And while years passed by like rough gems strung together
すまひつつ　いましものを
住乍　座之物乎　As she lived with us, since it is the fate of all
いけるひと　しぬといふことに
生者　死云事尓　Living things to die and there is no creature
まぬかれぬ　ものにしあれば
不免　物尓之有者　That can escape that which is known to all as Death,
たのめりし　ひとのことごと
憑有之　人乃盡　During the time when all of those on whom she relied
くさまくら　たびなるあいだに
草枕　客有間尓　Took grass for their pillow and left on a journey,
さほがはを　あさかはわたり
佐保河乎　朝河渡　In the morning she crossed the Saho river and,
かすがのを　そがいにみつつ
春日野乎　背向尓見乍　While looking back at the fields of Kasuga,
あしひきの　やまへをさして
足氷木乃　山邊乎指而　She headed toward the foot-tiring mountains,
ゆふやみと　かくりましぬれ
晩闇跡　隠益去礼　Disappearing there, as if dusk had fallen.
いはむすべ　せむすべしらに
将言為便　将為須敝不知尓　Thus, without knowing what to say or what to do,
たまとほり　ただひとりして
徘徊　直獨而　I wander in circles aimlessly and all alone,
しろたへの　ころもでほさず
白細之　衣袖不干　The sleeves of my white cloth mourning robes never dry.
なげきつつ　わがなくなみた
嘆乍　吾泣涙　While I grieve and grieve, the tears that I have cried—
ありまやま　くもゐたなびき
有間山　雲居軽引　Did they trail like clouds above Mount Arima
あめにふりきや
雨尓零寸八　And fall as if they were rain?

反歌
Envoy

とどめえぬ　いのちにしあれば
留不得　壽尓之在者　Since life is something which cannot be stayed,
しきたへの　いへゆはいでて
敷細乃　家従者出而　She left her home with her bed of white-bark cloth and
くもがくりにき
雲隠去寸　Disappeared into the clouds.

右新羅國尼名曰理願也　遠感王徳歸化聖朝　於時寄住大納言大将軍大伴卿家既逕數紀焉　惟以天平七年乙亥忽沈運病既趣泉界　於是大家石川命婦依餌藥事往有間温泉而不會此喪　但郎女獨留葬送屍柩既訖　仍作此歌贈入温泉
In the poem [above], there was a nun from Silla named Rigan. She felt from afar our ruler's virtue, and so she gave her allegiance to our sagely court. Thereupon she took up residence in the house of Great Counselor and Major General Lord Ōtomo, and quickly several years passed. However, in the seventh year of Tenpyō, Wood Swine, she suddenly sank into a fatal illness and departed at once for the realm of the Springs. At that time, the clan matriarch Ishikawa no Myōbu had gone to the springs in Arima for a cure to her own illness, and she was unable to be at the funeral. However, the lady [Sakanoue] alone

had remained behind, and she saw to the burial of the coffin. Afterwards, she composed this poem and sent it to the hot springs.[207]

While it cannot be confirmed as to what her exact role was in the Ōtomo family's residence since she appears only in the *Man'yōshū*, Katsuura Noriko speculates that Rigan was hired to educate the family's children, and the daughters in particular, about healing illness through the chanting of sutras, and to also perform services for the dead.[208] The fact that Sakanoue composed such a poem honoring this person upon her death indicates that she was close with at least the women in the Saho household. The endnote also informs us that this poem was composed during a time when Sakanoue's mother Lady Ishikawa, who is identified here as the Ōtomo matriarch 大家 (*ōtoji*), was away at a hot spring in Arima to treat her own illness. According to the endnote, this meant that Sakanoue had to assume her responsibilities and therefore was in charge of Rigan's funeral in her stead.

There are a number of other characteristics that make the Rigan Elegy one of the most unusual poetic sequences in the entire *Man'yōshū* besides the detail of its historical context. First and foremost is the subject to which the poem is dedicated. In an anthology that contains many eulogies written on behalf of emperors, imperial princes and princesses, the Rigan Elegy stands out as an example of a *banka* dedicated to a person who held neither royal nor aristocratic status. Granted, the section in which the Rigan Elegy is included in Volume III has a number of other poems dedicated to anonymous figures of lower social standing. The fact that the subject of the Elegy is someone with foreign origins, however, makes both Rigan and her memorial stand apart from other *banka* within Volume III and the anthology in general.

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[207] MYS III, Poems 460–61.

[208] Katsuura Noriko, *Kodai, chūsei no josei to bukkyō*. *Nihon shi riburetto* 16. Tokyo: Yamakawa shuppansha (2003), 3–33, andLori Meeks, "Nuns and Laywomen in East Asian Buddhism," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism*, ed. Mario Poceski . Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell (2014), 318–39.

Throughout the course of Sakanoue's Elegy, we follow the subject Rigan's journey from the far shores of Silla all the way to capital and the center of the Yamato imperial realm. She lives with Yasumaro's branch of the Ōtomo lineage in Saho before finally departing this world through the clouds, notably by going in the direction of Mount Kasuga near Tōdaiji. Many of the descriptors used in this sequence are commonly found in other examples of *banka*, from the subject's death described as disappearing into the clouds to the mourners left behind wandering in circles while dressed in white mourning robes and crying. The large amount of movement and depiction of the subject Rigan moving between multiple countries creates a grand narrative about the scope of her personal life. Sakanoue's Elegy thus does well to honor her subject.

Rigan's journey as described by Sakanoue also provides a literary representation of the *kika* 帰化 ("to submit and be transformed")[209] process foreign subjects underwent during the seventh and eighth centuries as they immigrated to Japan. As Nadia Kanagawa points out, the *kika* process which foreign subjects underwent when immigrating to the archipelago was not a question of ethnicity, but rather was a matter of subjecthood.[210] Furthermore, the *kika* process held dual purposes for a sovereign. First, it acted as a means of demonstrating a sovereign's "civilizing" influence on people from faraway lands and the extent of his or her realm beyond the archipelago. Second, it provided the sovereign and court with technologies, skills, and goods from abroad.[211] In other words, foreign subjects who pledged allegiance to the Yamato sovereign and court provided both material and symbolic benefits, and so were incorporated into the realm.

[209] I have borrowed this translation from Nadia Kanagawa in order to differentiate the meaning and process of *kika* for immigrants in early Japan from the naturalization process in modern Japan.

[210] Nadia Kanagawa, "Making the Realm, Transforming the People: Foreign Subjects in Seventh- through Ninth-Century Japan." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2019, 23.

[211] Ibid. 54, 76–77.

As the Rigan Elegy contains the only mention of the term *kika* and allusion to its process in the *Man'yōshū*, it becomes an important piece of literary evidence in terms of how other subjects of the Yamato court considered immigrant members of the community.

More specifically, the Rigan Elegy reveals the important role people such as the nun Rigan held in the households of ancient aristocratic families on both a social and literary level. The inclusion of this poem not only reveals one possible source of education for women such as Sakanoue, but also another poetic voice she could utilize in writing verse. Beyond the voice of a young romantic heroine, an anxious mother, or a leader in private family functions, Sakanoue operates in a similar manner to Hitomaro or Yakamochi by praising the sovereign as she mourns the death of one of the ruler's subjects in the Rigan Elegy. It is arguably her most public-facing poem in terms of subject matter.

Even so, previous scholarship spends much effort in arguing whether these poems should be considered as an example of *banka* alongside Hitomaro and other professional court poets, or whether they are more similar to *sōmon*. While scholars will often consider items such as the headnote and endnote in their interpretations, it usually is just within the context of the singular poetic sequence and does not extend to the volume in which it was included, much less the *Man'yōshū* as a whole. This reveals recurring issues with studies on Sakanoue, namely that her gender becomes an overwrought factor in the analysis of her poetry as scholars ask whether her poems in other categories are actually *sōmon*.

The source of this problem in the case of the Rigan Elegy involves both the main text of the poem and the endnote. Scholars in the past have pointed out its unusual combination of *banka* imagery and phrasing with an epistolary format that is more commonly found in *sōmon* or *zōtōka* poetry 贈答歌 ("correspondence poems"). Omodaka summarizes this tension in his

analysis of the Elegy by saying that, while Sakanoue combines words and imagery found in older poems by Hitomaro and Okura, demonstrating her skill as a poet, the emotions expressed in her lament lack the same emotion as the poems function as a report to a specific audience (Lady Ishikawa).[212] One glaring issue with Omodaka's evaluation of the Elegy as subpar compared to its *banka* predecessors is the implication that *banka* poetry in general ought to be evaluated on the basis of its affective power alone. Even the most personal eulogies composed by Hitomaro contain imagery or language that extoll the power and virtue of the sovereign, just as the Rigan Elegy does. Therefore, even if the original context under which the Rigan Elegy was composed was in a private correspondence between two members of the same household, their inclusion in the anthology along with language used both in the poem and endnote means that Sakanoue's sequence exists in the same textual space as Hitomaro's or Okura's.

In addition, the fact that the Rigan Elegy's structure is reminiscent of structures and language found in other *banka*, particularly those composed by Hitomaro provides clear support that the sequence is correctly classified as an example of *banka*. In his analysis, Kajikawa Nobuyuki outlines the structure of the *chōka* as the following:

I. Rigan During her Lifetime
   ① Arrival at Court (Lines 1～8)
   ② Lodging at the Saho Residence (Lines 9～20)

[212] Omodaka 3 (1957), 617-18. "I mentioned before that this author has unique chōka poetry not seen in other female authors (Poem 379, "the God-Worshiping Song"), and here again she has left behind the longest example as a woman writer. As mentioned in the commentary, the words and verses used by Hitomaro, Okura, Tabito and others are repeated, but one can recognize the skill in gathering them all into one poem. However, I am of the same mind as the *shichū*, which points out that this work functions as a means to report the nun's death to people at Arima onsen, anticipating a specific reader, and moreover the opening passages also have an arrangement that is fit for general understanding and appreciation, and that the author's attitude there is unconvincing, so as a poem there is no emphasis on deep emotion."
この作家には他の女流作家に見ない異色の長歌のあること前（三七九［祭神歌］）にも述べたが、ここにまた女流作家としては最大の長篇を残してゐる。訓釈の條であげたやうに、既に人麻呂や憶良や旅人などによって用ゐられた語句がくりかへされてゐるが、よく一首をこれだけにまとめあげたところにこの人の技量が認められる。ただ私注に、この作が尼の死を有間温泉にゐる人達に報告する形で、特定の読者を豫相するものであり、しかもはじめの書出しなどは一般の理解鑑賞に堪へる用意もあり、そこに作者の態度が不徹底で、一首としての感動の中心がない点を指摘されてゐる事は同感である。

③ Permanent Residency (Lines 21～26)

II. Rigan's Death and Funeral (Lines 27～42)

III. The Author Lady Sakanoue's Sorrow and Query to Lady Ishikawa (Lines 43～53)[213]

Just as with some of Hitomaro's elegies, the Rigan Elegy first start with the description of the poetic subject's life before giving a vague explanation of their death, punctuated by a phrase commonly found in banka "what was it that they could have been thinking?" Finally, the *chōka* ends with a description about the narrator's grief at the situation. In the case of the Hitomaro banka, this voice sometimes manifests as representing the grief of a group (i.e., the Yamato court) rather than an individual, but here in the Rigan poems it is more clearly speaking of Sakanoue's personal sorrow.[214]

Kajikawa also points out parallels between the Rigan Elegy and Yamanoue no Okura's Japanese Elegy 日本挽歌 inscribed in Volume V. The subject of this poem is unknown. Theories abound whether the woman is Okura or Tabito's wife:

大王能　等保乃朝庭等 (おほきみの　とほのみかどと)	To the distant residence of our Great Lord,
斯良農比　筑紫國尓 (しらぬひ　つくしのくにに)	In the country of Tsukushi, fires unknown,
泣子那須　斯多比枳摩斯提 (なくこなす　したひきまして)	Like a crying child, while yearning she came
伊企陁尓母　伊摩陁夜周米受 (いきだにも　いまだやすめず)	But without a moment's pause to even breathe
年月母　伊摩他阿良祢婆 (としつきも　いまだあらねば)	Months and years had yet to even pass when,
許々呂由母　於母波奴阿比陁尓 (こころゆも　おもはぬあひだに)	Completely unimaginable in my heart,
宇知那 毗枳　許夜斯努礼 (うちなびき　こやしぬれ)	She suddenly swayed like the grass and layed down,
伊波牟須弊　世武須弊斯良尓 (いはむすべ　せむすべしらに)	And I neither know what to say nor what to do,
石木乎母　刀比佐氣斯良受 (いはきをも　とひさけしらず)	I do not know what to ask even the rocks and trees.
伊弊那良婆　迦多知波阿良牟乎 (いへならば　かたちはあらむを)	If she had been at home, I would at least have her form.
宇良賣斯企　伊毛乃美許等能 (うらめしき　いものみことの)	How hateful she is, my precious Little Sister

[213] Kajikawa Nobuyuki, "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no 'Hitan Ama Rigan shikyo sakka' no ron: 'banka' no isō." *Gobun* 58 (1983), 21.

[214] For a discussion on voice in Hitomaro's poetry, see Duthie (2014), 203–42.

阿礼乎婆母　伊可尓世与等可　　What did she intend to do in regard to me?
尓保鳥能　　布多利那良毗為　　Though we spoke of standing side-by-side as if
加多良比斯　許々呂曽牟企弖　　We were a pair of grebes, she turned her back on us
伊弊社可利伊摩須　　And departed from our home!

[Poems 795 through 799 not translated]

神龜五年七月廿一日　筑前國守山上憶良上
On the 21st day of the Seventh Month in the fifth year of Jinki [728], the provincial director of Chikuzen, Yamanoue no Okura, presented the above.[215]

Both the Rigan Elegy and the Japanese Elegy contain similarities in terms of how the deceased subjects' actions and movements in life and death are portrayed. The women initially come of their accord to the court in which the author resides, as if drawn to the land by its splendor. These descriptors illustrate the grandeur of the sovereign and imperial court and their power over their subjects. Then, without warning, these women depart from home and the earthly realm during a time when their kin or associates were away. This in turn fuels the narrators' grief as they both ask in vain why the subject would depart while alone. According to the paratext for the Japanese Elegy, Okura composed this poem in Jinki 5 (728), which dates it before the Rigan Elegy by seven years. For this reason, Kajikawa believes that Sakanoue was inspired by Okura's poem in addition to Hitomaro in writing the Rigan Elegy.[216] The parallels between Okura's and Sakanoue's contributions make it clear that there is a formula in creating *banka* poetry.

On the opposite end to Kajikawa are scholars who consider the Rigan Elegy as a *sōmon* poem that happens to be classified as a *banka*. For example, Aso Mizue argues that while the poem was created for a "lament-style" opportunity and on the surface resembles a *banka*, on a

[215] MYS V, Poems 794–799. For a full English translation of Poems 794 through 799 plus the preface and poem written in *kanbun* preceding them, see Levy (1981), 344–47.

[216] Kajikawa (1983), 17–30.

practical level it functions as a *sōmon* poem.[217] Asano Noriko similarly treats the poem as a *sōmon* and Lady Ishikawa's presence as support. She states that, "We should think of this poem as a *sōmon* poetic expression that captures the heart of a living partner, and not just see it simply from the perspective of a *banka*."[218] While it can certainly be argued that the Rigan Elegy along with Sakanoue's other non-*sōmon* poems have aspects that resemble *sōmon*, it is less due to any intrinsic quality of her poetic expression and more due to the limited social contexts that were available for women to compose poetry. As discussed earlier in this chapter, women by the mid-eighth century seemed to no longer have access to public forums for poetic composition.

The truth is that examples of poetry across the three major categories of *zōka*, *banka*, and *sōmon* in the *Man'yōshū* often contain language and imagery that overlaps with poetry from other categories. Elements such as the gender and social status of the author, initial recipient, or poetic subject do not matter in terms of how a poem is classified in the *Man'yōshū*, but they matter to readers now. As with Sakanoue's other contributions in Volume III, the Rigan Eulogy's placement in the book is subject to contestation in commentaries and modern-day scholarship on the basis of the author's gender once more.

More recent studies on the Rigan Elegy have opened up new potential avenues of research by embracing its unique features in their interpretations. For example, Ido Mihoko considers how the endnote reframes the entire poem as having more than one audience. She states the following:

> We can treat [this Elegy] as a new style of *banka* whose construction is accomplished with a *chōka*, *hanka*, and [endnote] that is conscious of the *banka*, or words concerned

[217] Aso Mizue. "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume." *Man'yō no kajintachi*. Tokyo: Musashino shoin, 1974.

[218] Asano Noriko (1994), 206–19.

with the theme of death, and one where revisions were added with an awareness of recipients besides Lady Ishikawa.[219]

In other words, by the time of the Elegy's composition in 735, the *banka* was already well-established as a literary form. This explains the formulaic nature of the poem. Formulaic poetry, however, was not seen as a sign of lacking creativity, but rather as a sign of the author's knowledge of poetry. In addition, the endnote's explanatory nature suggests that someone thought this poem might be recorded elsewhere. Ido believes that Sakanoue herself wrote the endnote following the Elegy, and therefore was cognizant of other potential audiences. As others have pointed out, however, there is a possibility that Yakamochi later added this note for context.[220] I too am also cautious to attribute this knowledge to any specific person. Nevertheless, the fact that the Rigan Elegy was composed initially as something to be read rather than a song to be performed indicates changes in poetic practice during the eighth century. Not only were people exchanging shorter *sōmon* style poems, but also other poetic forms such as *banka*. Poetry also became a means of reporting news and could possibly be recorded later in anthologies.

The Rigan Elegy also provides an example of how the meaning of certain phrases used in one poetic form can change in a different form. In his article exploring how the common term *hitogoto* 人言 ("people's words") is used in *Man'yō* poetry, Matsuda Hiroshi argues that a term often associated with passionate verses about avoiding the eyes of others belies deeper political meaning about the influence of the court on individuals.[221] As the only example out of thirty-one

[219] Ido Mihoko "Ōtomo no Sakanoue no Iratsume no 'Ama Rigan no uta:' uta to sachū o chūshin ni." *Chūkyō daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 32 (1999).

[220] Matsuda Hiroshi "*Man'yō* no 'hitogoto': Ama Rigan banka o kiten to shite." *Nihon bungaku* 56, no. 5 (2007), 28, note 8.

[221] Ibid. 25–26.

uses of the word in the anthology not related to a romantic tryst, *hitogoto* is used in the Rigan Elegy as an allusion to the Sovereign's virtuous government mentioned in the endnote. Referencing instances in the *Nihon shoki* where members of the court sang in praise of the sovereign, Matsuda argues that the term *hitogoto* as used in the Rigan elegy is meant to refer specifically to these voices singing in praise.[222] Since Rigan could hear those voices from as far as the Korean peninsula was compelled to come, the poem can be interpreted as not just a memorial for an Ōtomo household member, but also as a tribute to the power of the sovereign and his court in Yamato.

What does this interpretation then mean for the significance of the Rigan Elegy on an anthological level, particularly in regard to the Ōtomo subplot? For one, it incorporates Sakanoue into the larger political undercurrents surrounding Volume III. The *banka* section starts with a poem composed by Prince Shōtoku when he sees a dead man on a mountain during an imperial procession. Next comes a poem from Prince Ōtsu 大津皇子 (663–686) before he is executed. As one of Emperor Tenmu's sons who also had a mother from Emperor Tenji's line, he was a strong contender for the throne and a rival of Empress Jitō's own son and preferred heir, Prince Kusakabe 草壁皇子 (662–689).[223] While the inclusion of Ōtsu's poetry here may seem odd, given that he was a threat to the Tenmu-Jitō dual line of succession, as Duthie has argued, Ōtsu functions within the text as a sympathetic character, included in the anthology in order to honor an alternate that could have been.[224] There is no mention of the reason for his execution within the text. In omitting the reason for Prince Ōtsu's execution, the compiler obscures unsavory

[222] Ibid.
[223] See Kojima Noriyuki, et. al., eds., *Nihon shoki* SNKBZ 3, 466–69.

[224] For a discussion of how Prince Ōtsu functions as a "might-have-been" sovereign in early historiographies, see Duthie (2014), 152–156.

moments or forces within the Yamato court and transmits an image of the prince as a tragic figure.

As Volume III's section has grim beginnings with the context of its opening poems, this creates a somber mood that continues for the rest of the section. The kinds of people over which the poets grieve are generally of lower station than those in Volume II. Many are dedicated to anonymous men and women, and a handful are written in the wake of someone either being executed or committing suicide. Beginning from Kamo no Mabuchi's *Man'yō no kō*, scholarship has tended to view Volume III as focusing on instances of "private mourning" in comparison to the "public" demonstrations of Volume II.[225] I would modify that statement to say that if Volume II's *banka* section overall is designed as an exaltation of former sovereigns and heirs that passed away too soon, then the main purpose of Volume III's section is to neutralize figures that threatened the sovereigns from Tenmu and Jitō's dynasty by honoring them as tragic figures instead.[226]

One of said major figures was none other than Prince Nagaya, a major political ally for Tabito. As mentioned earlier, one of Nagaya's contributions is included in the *zōka* section of Volume III. Poem 441 by a woman named Princess Kurahashibe 倉橋部女王 (dates unknown) mourns over Nagaya's death and the headnote even mentions that he was put to death.
Just as Tenchi's wives and female relatives mourn him in succession in Volume II, Prince Nagaya's memorial comes from a woman who was presumably related to him in some

[225] For an example, see *Man'yōshū zenchū* 3, 5.

[226] While laments for Prince Ōtsu are also included in Volume II's *banka* section (Poems 163–166), and their inclusion is likely for the same purposes as those I propose for Volume III, they take up considerably less space than the long sequences honoring figures such as Prince Kusakabe or Prince Takechi.

manner.[227] Immediately following this poem is an elegy for Prince Nagaya's son, Prince Kashiwade 膳部王 (d. 729), who also was forced to commit suicide as punishment for his father's crimes. While the endnote states that it is not clear who the author was, there are some theories that Tabito in fact wrote it.[228] Since there was a possibility that Tabito was relocated to Dazaifu in 728 in order to take away some of Prince Nagaya's allies in court by the Fujiwara, the placement of Poems 441 and 442, clear tributes to Prince Nagaya's family, in the middle of a section with poems from the Dazaifu Circle (Poems 437 – 459), act as a subversive way to link the two men even such an association might have been undesirable at the time.

The Dazaifu section begins and ends with compositions from Tabito that position him as a tragic figure. Tabito's first sequence is dedicated to a dead woman. Given intertextual references to works such as Okura's "Japanese Elegy," the woman is presumed to be Tabito's wife who allegedly died soon after they both arrived in Dazaifu for Tabito's tenure as governor-general. The last set of poems describe Tabito's return trip home to the capital, thus completing the arc set up for Tabito in the *zōka* section. Once a loyal subject who is sent away to fulfill his duty, he suffers personal loss in the death of his wife before finally being able to return once more to the sovereign and court before dying himself.

After a series of poems mourning Tabito's death (Poems 454 through 459), Sakanoue's elegy written to the nun Rigan begins the last subsection that can be said to represent Volume III's "present." It covers the period after Tabito's death and into the latter days of Shōmu's reign. This is one of the few sections that has a rough sense of chronology (735 through 744 at least) thanks to the endnote for Poems 460 and 461 as well as the date of Prince Asaka's death as

[227] Itō (1995), 311–12.

[228] *Zenchū* (1983), 12.

described in the headnote for Poem 475. After the Rigan Elegy, the majority of remaining poems included in the anthology are authored by Yakamochi. Here he grieves over his first wife for several poems, with one response early on from his brother Fumimochi (Poem 463). The capstone of his contributions is a series of poems praising and mourning the sudden death of Prince Asaka, Shōmu's potential heir favored by the political faction with whom Yakamochi was associated (Poems 475 through 480). Yakamochi's eulogy for Prince Asaka sees a return to the style and subject of *banka* reminiscent of Hitomaro:

十六年甲申春二月安積皇子薨之時内舎人大伴宿祢家持作歌六首
When Prince Asaka passed away in the second month of Spring in the Sixteenth Year [744]*, Wood Monkey, the ministerial attendant Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi composed six poems.*

挂巻母　綾尓恐之	To even think about it is truly fearful,
言巻毛　齋忌志伎可物	To even speak of it makes me hesitate still!
吾王　御子乃命	In the capital of Kuni in Great Yamato
萬代尓　食賜麻思	Where our great lord, His Royal Highness,
大日本　久迩乃京者	Was supposed to rule for ten thousand generations,
打靡　春去奴礼婆	Springtime has arrived with its gentle fluttering.
山邊尓波　花咲乎為里	On the mountainside trees heavy with blossoms bend
河湍尓波　年魚小狭走	And in the river rapids young, small sweetfish jump.
弥日異　榮時尓	During a time of prosperity day by day,
逆言之　狂言登加聞	What backwards, nonsensical words I now hear!
白細尓　舎人装束而	His attendants, clad in mourning robes of white cloth,
和豆香山　御輿立之而	Have carried his palanquin up Mount Wazuka
久堅乃　天所知奴礼	Where he shall rule over the distant heavens,
展轉　涅打雖泣	Though I fall down in anguish, drowned in the tears I cry,
将為須便毛奈思	There is nothing I can do now.

反歌
Envoys

吾王　天所知牟登	Since I never thought that our great lord would ascend

不思者　於保尓曽見谿流　To rule the heavens, with indifference I glanced
和豆香蘇麻山　At Mount Wazuka’s forests.

足檜木乃　山左倍光　Like the flowers that bloom as if to bathe in light
咲花乃　散去如寸　The foot-dragging mountains, only to scatter and fall,
吾王香聞　So too was our great lord!

右三首二月三日作歌
The [above] three poems were composed on the third day of the second month.

挂巻毛　文尓恐之　To even think about it is truly fearful.
吾王　皇子之命　Our Great Lord, His Royal Highness the Prince
物乃負能　八十伴男乎　Calling for all the families of warrior men,
召集聚　率比賜比　Gathered his vassals and brought them along with him.
朝獦尓　鹿猪踐起　On the morning hunt, he drove out the deer and boar.
暮獦尓　鶉雉履立　On the evening hunt, the quail and pheasant took flight.
大御馬之　口抑駐　Pulling on the reins in the mouth of his noble steed,
御心乎　見為明米之　His heart brightened when he gazed at the scenery
活道山　木立之繁尓　Of Mount Ikuji, where even flowers that bloomed
咲花毛　移尓家里　Among the thick foliage have all scattered away.
世間者　如此耳奈良之　Such is the way of this ephemeral world, it seems.
大夫之　心振起　Stirring awake the hearts of valiant men,
劔刀　腰尓取佩　Taking swords and knives, fastening them to his waist,
梓弓　靫取負而　And strapped his catalpa bow and quiver to his back.
天地与　弥遠長尓　Long and enduring, like with heaven and earth,
萬代尓　如此毛欲得跡　For ten thousand ages, we wished it were as thus.
憑有之　皇子乃御門乃　Now those relying on him in his palace,
五月蠅成　驟驂舎人者　The attendants clamor like house flies in Summer
白栲尓　服取著而　And don mourning robes made of white hempen cloth.
常有之　咲比振麻比　Their usual smiles and their merriment
弥日異　更経見者　Disappear day by day, and when I see this,
悲呂可聞　How deeply saddened I am!

反歌
Envoys

波之吉可聞　皇子之命乃　　How heartbreaking it is! The road of Mount Ikuji
安里我欲比　見之活道乃　　Upon which His Highness always gazed as he passed by,
路波荒尓鷄里　　Has been utterly laid waste.

大伴之　名負靫帶而　　Strapping to my back the quiver bearing the Ōtomo name,
萬代尓　憑之心　　This heart I entrusted with my lord for ten thousand ages,
何所可将寄　　Where shall I place it now?[229]

Thus, the Ōtomo subplot of Volume III, which began with establishing Tabito's devotion to the imperial house in Poems 315 and 316, composed during a procession to Yoshino, ends with Yakamochi also showcasing his loyalty, though the last poem in the Prince Asaka Eulogy asks where he can place that loyalty now that Shōmu's male heir has suddenly died. Yakamochi's lament clearly emulates a public poetic voice in the ancient style associated with Hitomaro, but there is a sense of loss and ambivalence on a personal and familial level as he explicitly mentions the Ōtomo name and legacy weighing on his mind, a drastic departure from Hitomaro's poems that exalted the sovereign while mourning his or her imperial subjects.

Within this arc about the Ōtomo lineage's political fortunes, the Rigan Elegy by Sakanoue functions on a textual level as an expression of devotion to and respect for Emperor Shōmu, as Rigan immigrates to the court in order to pledge allegiance to the Yamato house after hearing other people's words of praise.[230] It also demonstrates Sakanoue's poetic skills as she deftly uses expressions commonly seen in *banka*, situating her work within the same realm as Hitomaro, Okura, and Yakamochi. At the same time, with its suggestion that the poem was originally sent as a letter, the Rigan Elegy reveals at least one context under which women wrote

[229] MYS III, Poems 475–480.

[230] Of course, Rigan likely arrived before Shōmu ascended the throne.

banka during the eighth century as their participation in public forums dwindled. In this regard, the Rigan Elegy becomes an important artifact for understanding not only social institutions such as immigration, the *kika* process, and the position of nuns in aristocratic households, but also literary production by women in the eighth century.

Though there is a possibility that the Elegy was a later addition along with Yakamochi's eulogy for Prince Asaka, it also implies that these pieces were included by a compiler close to the Ōtomo lineage, in particular Sakanoue and Yakamochi. By including these poems in the text of Volume III, the compiler not only conveys the full scope of the sovereign's power, legitimated through poems that map the boundaries of his realm and influence as well as neutralize threats to their standing. They also enshrine the Ōtomo lineage's proximity and loyalty to that center of power through their knowledge of poetic forms and traditions practiced by the sovereign and his or her subjects.

Conclusion: Constructing the Eighth-Century Aristocratic Woman

Compared to Volume IV where Sakanoue's presence is so overwhelming as to make her one of the book's primary protagonists, her contributions in Volume III occur with less frequency and it would be more accurate to describe her as one member in a chorus of voices. Within this group, poetic compositions from women of similar or higher rank than Sakanoue are notably few, and longer entries that take up more space in the book are predominantly written by men. Nonetheless, the few substantial entries written by a woman in Volume III all name Sakanoue as their author. By default, this makes her *the* representative of women's writing in poetic categories such as *zōka* and *banka* during the eighth century. At the same time, it is clear that one of the reasons for the inclusion of entries such as the God-Worshiping Song or the Rigan

Elegy has to do with Sakanoue's relationship with Yakamochi, who likely added the last subsections to the *zōka* and *banka* sections and might have inserted the section dedicated to *hiyuka* in between. Though we cannot confirm the historical circumstances behind Volume III's compilation, the repetitive structure of each section along with the consistent inclusion of at least one entry by Sakanoue provides strong circumstantial evidence for the theory.

Previous scholarship tends to cite Sakanoue and Yakamochi's close relationship as the main reason for her prolific representation in Volume III and the *Man'yōshū* as a whole. To a certain extent I concur with this view, but I also think that works such as the God-Worshiping Song and the Rigan Elegy function as more than mere examples of the kind of poetry Sakanoue wrote. Rather, they function on a textual level as a means of promulgating both Ōtomo literary prowess and the lineage's loyalty to the sovereign. As part of a triad with Tabito and Yakamochi, each of Sakanoue's poems in Volume III either address internal family politics directly or contextualizes them within the scope and influence of the Yamato realm. This additional function in Sakanoue's entries is clear from the use of paratextual elements to contextualize them within a larger frame. Few other poems in Volume III have such frameworks besides works by Tabito, Yakamochi, and people associated with the Ōtomo lineage, implying a deliberate intent to construct a kind of "plot" surrounding the family and their allies. While Tabito's entries on longing to return to the capital and Yakamochi's Eulogy for Prince Asaka in Volume III only covertly refer to the political turmoil that embroiled the court and line of succession during Emperor Shōmu's reign, that plot along with the Ōtomo lineage's role becomes more explicit in Volume VI.

Chapter Three:

Alternative Histories and Narratives: Sakanoue's Poems in Volume VI

Introduction: An Ambivalent New Age

After his aunt Empress Genshō's abdication in 724, Prince Obito acceded the throne. This event was long awaited by the court, as Obito (posthumously known as Shōmu) was initially named as Crown Prince by his grandmother Empress Genmei ten years earlier.[231] His enthronement also signaled the continuation of Tenmu and Jitō's joint dynasty, a legacy that is memorialized in the early historiographies of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, and Volumes I and II of the *Man'yōshū*.[232] On the one hand, Shōmu's reign can thus be considered as a return to form after over a decade of rule by Emperor Monmu's female relatives while the prince came of age. The event was a resolution to an uneasy tension that had settled over the court in regard to who the next (male) ruler should be. Certain political factions became agitated, however, as the new emperor was both born from a non-royal mother, Fujiwara no Miyako, and married to her younger sister Asukabehime, later known as Empress Consort Kōmyō 光明皇后 (701 – 760). As they were both daughters of the head of the Fujiwara lineage, Fuhito, this gave him and his children unprecedented influence over the court, signaling the rise of Fujiwara dominance among the nobility and threatening the position of other imperial descendants within the court. In other words, Shōmu's reign was also marked by a new power center within the Yamato court that did not come from a branch of the imperial family.

[231] See the entry for the Sixth Month of Wadō 7 in SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 1, 215.

[232] For a study on this in English, see Duthie (2014).

None of this tension appears on the surface in the opening poems of Volume VI, a book noted for its tight focus as a compilation of works that commemorate Emperor Shōmu's reign.[233] Rather, it is hidden among intertextual references and insinuations made by the inclusion or exclusion of certain paratextual elements. Every poem until a certain point in 744 is dated and contextualized as belonging to either a public event, theme, or travel, after which suddenly the explanations disappear. Some scholars interpret this as an intentional strategy on the part of the compiler(s) to observe the death of Shōmu's son, Prince Asaka, in the spring of that year. It also suggests a bias favoring one of Shōmu's children as heir over another: as Asaka was backed by the Ōtomo and their allies, the prince's passing held significant ramifications for the lineage's future at court.

That anxiety pervades many of the poems written by members of the Ōtomo lineage and their associates. Within the space of Volume VI, the "Ōtomo subplot" continues with contributions from Tabito, Sakanoue, and Yakamochi in the usual format where the narrative starts at Dazaifu before eventually returning to the capital. Just as with Volumes III and IV, Sakanoue's role in this volume can be described as an axis around which other figures revolve and as someone who helps keep family members from certain branches together, presenting a unified front in the anthology. Her poems in this book mainly consist of examples of either poems composed in a banquet setting or travel poetry 羈旅歌 (*kiryoka*). They are rare examples of women writing poetry while traveling on their own, and not as part of a public procession or within the private setting of family banquets. Despite the private settings surrounding most of her contributions to Volume VI, Sakanoue's poems still fit into a larger historical narrative surrounding the first half of Emperor Shōmu's reign. Namely, their purpose is to obscure a

[233] Kanazawa (2002), 102.

period marked by Fujiwara dominance. In its place, a personal narrative about the Ōtomo legacy and the rise of their political allies at court becomes the focus of a book commemorating Emperor Shōmu's reign. Her poems in this book portray her not only as a major figure within the networks of the Ōtomo lineage, but also as a member of the court at large, implicitly aligned with certain factions through the efforts of her nephew's editing hand.

Marriage Politics and the State of the Court in the Mid-Eighth Century

In the wake of the Jinshin War of 672, Tenmu and his Empress Consort and eventual successor Jitō made a concerted effort to establish a new imperial dynasty and secure his legacy. After Tenmu's death, Jitō strove to eliminate any a threats to her own son by Tenmu, Crown Prince Kusakabe 草壁皇子 (662 – 689), with the execution of Kusakabe's half-brother Prince Ōtsu, a son born from Tenmu's marriage to one of Tenchi's other daughters, Princess Ōta 大田皇女 (d. 688), who possessed the same dual-royal lineage as Kusakabe. After Kusakabe's untimely death, and Jitō's own accession to the throne, Jitō eventually managed to secure a continuation of rule by the descendants of her marriage with Tenmu through the enthronement of her grandson Emperor Monmu (681–707, r. 697–707), but such stability did not last long.

After Monmu's sudden and unexpected demise, Monmu's mother acceded the throne as Empress Genmei 元明天皇 (660–721, r. 707–715) in order to safeguard the throne until her grandson came of age. In an unprecedented move, Genmei abdicated the throne in favor of her daughter and Monmu's older sister, now known as Empress Genshō. Genshō became the first female sovereign to inherit the throne from another woman instead of a man, breaking convention. In addition, neither Genshō nor Genmei served as Empress Consort before inheriting the throne, defying another precedent of their female predecessors. This provided enough reason

for eligible princes and their factions to vie for the throne, as there were still living male descendants of Tenmu's with double royal lineage.[234] Moreover, given the status of Obito's mother as a non-royal noble, there were further reasons for opposition to Genmei and Obito's enthronements. [235]

Amidst the precarious situation regarding succession, the Fujiwara lineage gradually gained power and influence over the imperial house and rose through court ranks. Beginning with Emperor Tenchi's bestowal of the name "Fujiwara" upon Nakatomi no Kamatari 中臣鎌足 (614–669) after the statesman assisted him in overthrowing Soga no Iruka 蘇我入鹿 in 645, the lineage steadily climbed upward in rank. When Emperor Tenmu reformed the *kabane* 姓 system of hereditary noble titles into the eight *kabane* system 八色の姓 (*yakusa no kabane*) in 684, the Fujiwara were given the second highest rank of *ason* 朝臣, whereas other ancient noble lineages such as the Ōtomo were designated the third highest rank of *sukune* 宿禰.[236] Eventually his son Fuhito gained favor from Empress Jitō for backing her son Prince Kusakabe in his bid for the throne and began appointing his own sons Muchimaro, Fusasaki, Umakai, and Maro into high-ranking positions within the Council of State. Furthermore, by marrying his daughters first to

[234] Namely, Prince Nagaya and Prince Toneri 舎人親王 (676–735), famous for presiding over the compilation of the *Nihon shoki*. Nagaya perished tragically, but Toneri's son eventually acceded the throne as Emperor Junnin 淳仁天皇 (733–765, r. 758–764). Granted, his reign did not last long, and his cousin Kōken took back the throne and reigned again as Empress Shōtoku 称徳天皇 (r. 764–770).

[235] Piggott (1997), 239.

[236] Under the old system, the Nakatomi and Ōtomo lineages were given the same designation of *muraji* 連, the second highest rank bestowed on lineages that could trace their origins to a progenitor god.

Monmu and then to Shōmu, Fuhito positioned himself as an important advisor for both and established deep ties between the Fujiwara and the imperial household.[237]

According to Joan Piggott, it became necessary for Genshō and Obito to gain support from Tenmu's sons in order for her to successfully pass the title of sovereign onto him. An edict from the tenth month in Yōrō 3 [719] recorded in the *Shoku Nihongi* indicates as much:

> Thinking about our distant ancestors and the procedures of succession from generation to generations, the heir is the crown prince [*kōtaishi*]. But he [Obito] is still immature and not accustomed to the ways of ruling. Even he who ascends the throne after auspicious signs and prognostications needs talented assistance to rule in great peace [*taihei*]. Only through the efforts of supporters with all under Heaven be tranquil.
>
> When it comes to the princes Toneri and Niitabe, they are branches of a long-lived and prolific tree like a pine or a *katsura* that endures for a thousand years. They are like a father to his son, the cornerstone of a great castle and its very foundation. They are of critical importance to the realm [*kokka*]. Naturally they should aid its heir, serving dutifully and assisting in his youth. Only if they do so can we expect a rule of great peace and harmony.[238]

In this proclamation Genshō artfully reminds her audience of the legacy she and Obito carry for the imperial family, reaffirming his position first and foremost as an imperial prince and heir by mentioning Tenchi's court in Ōmi and Monmu's court in Fujiwara. Then she calls on the princes to assist Obito as it is their duty to maintain the legacy of their father and family relatives. Following this statement, Genshō also increased both Toneri and Niitabe's stipends and expanded their staff, surely giving them monetary incentive. In return the princes supported Obito's enthronement a few years later.

At the time of Obito's enthronement, Genshō's oral edict once again utilizes a framework based on the legacy of Tenchi's court in Ōmi, establishing the prince as the rightful ruler and heir to Monmu, a sovereign descended from both Tenchi and Tenmu's lines. Her edict reads:

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[237] In other words, the marriage politics for which Heian period statesmen such as Fujiwara no Michinaga 藤原道長 (966 – 1088) were infamous had their roots in the *ritsuryō* period where imperial power was at its zenith.

[238] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 60–61. Translation from Piggott (1997), 240.

> The rule of this land is a task…bequeathed to you [Shōmu] by the august sovereign, your father [Monmu]… When He bequeathed it, you were young in years and weak… and so it was conveyed to the august mother [Genmei]. As a deity incarnate she ruled over the eight-island realm from the Nara capital. Then in the first year of the Reiki era [715] she relinquished the throne of Heavenly sun succession to me [Genshō], that I might rule the realm under Heaven. She commanded that, in accordance with the constant and unchanging law that was promulgated by the Yamato sovereign [Tenji] of the Ōtsu palace in Ōmi, the task should later be conveyed to you… Now a great sign has appeared, send by [the deities of] Heaven and earth. And when we saw that the harvest in the four quarters was abundant and rich, even as a deity incarnate… we though this a sign… heralding the reign we hereby convey.[239]

Shōmu's response, likewise, articulates the role of sovereign as something defined by divine right and genealogy. It also articulates a feeling of anxiety on his behalf with the knowledge that his ability to rule is in part defined by the acceptance of the nobles and princes of the court:

> I have heard and received with reverence the august word of the sovereign, on the one hand not daring to refuse the royal command and on the other feeling that I am unskilled, unworthy and without knowledge to accept the charge. Unable to go backward or forward, I am even as a god anxious concerning the will of Heaven and earth and fearful concerning the mind of officialdom. Therefore all you august children, princes and nobles, with pure, bright, just, and upright hearts, guide and assist the sovereign household in governing the people under Heaven.[240]

With references back to Monmu's acceptance of the mandate from Jitō,[241] it is clear that Genshō and Shōmu used precedence as a means to establish them as natural inheritors of their family's legacy. In addition, Shōmu's self-deprecation during his acceptance of his aunt's command gestures toward the opposition he faced from other members of the court. Such struggles continued even after his ascension to the throne, regardless of Shōmu's attempts at appeasing both the Fujiwara and imperial household factions.

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[239] Ibid. 139–141, Translation from Piggott (1997), 243.

[240] Ibid. Translation from Piggott (1997), 243.

[241] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 1, 2–5.

One such attempt at winning the support of the princes and their noble lineage allies was the election of Prince Nagaya to the position of Minister of the Left 左大臣 in 724 right after Shōmu's enthronement.[242] Piggott considers this decision "as a negotiated settlement between Nagaya's supporters and Shōmu's."[243] As the son of Tenmu's eldest son Prince Takechi, memorialized in an elegy composed by Hitomaro in Volume II as a hero during the Jinshin War of 672,[244] Nagaya had supporters among ancient families such as the Ōtomo, and proved a worthy adversary to the Fujiwara lineage's control over the imperial house from the Council of State. In 728 Shōmu's firstborn son by Asukabehime named Prince Motoi 基皇子 died less than a year after being named Crown Prince 皇太子 (*kōtaishi*) at the end of 727.[245] Following his death, Prince Nagaya was accused of treason by having cursed the child, and a force led by Fujiwara no Umakai surrounded his residence.[246] This accusation and the subsequent forced suicide of Prince Nagaya and his family is now known in history as the Prince Nagaya Incident. An entry from 738 later claims that the accusations brought against Nagaya were false, leaving the impression that he was set up by Fuhito's sons.[247] Whether coincidence or a conspiracy planned out in advance, it is clear that the Fujiwara brothers seized an opportunity to oust one of their major rival factions and solidify control of the court.

[242] Ibid. 144–45.

[243] Piggott (1997), 245.

[244] MYS II, Poems199 – 202. For an English translation and analysis, see Duthie (2014), 313–16.

[245] See entries in SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, on pages 186 and 201.

[246] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 205.

[247] See SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 341–43.

That control ended abruptly in 737 when a smallpox epidemic that had been sweeping through the archipelago for two years arrived at the capital. All four Fujiwara brothers perished from the plague, leading the way for Tachibana no Moroe's rise to power in the Council of the State. Born Prince Katsuragi 葛城王 (684–757), he was made a subject of the state in 736 and given his mother's surname, "Tachibana," thus founding the lineage with that namesake.[248] Two years later, Moroe was promoted to Minister of the Right 右大臣 (*udaijin*). At the same time, however, the daughter of his half-sister, Empress Kōmyō, Princess Abe 安倍内親王, was named Crown Princess 皇太子 (*kōtaishi*).[249] This was the first instance where a woman was named heir to the throne rather than inheriting the title of sovereign as a placeholder until a Crown Prince came of age.

Princess Abe's investiture as Crown Princess was not easily accepted by the court, another sign of the gender hierarchy that was solidifying under the *ritsuryō* system according to Piggott.[250] In response to doubts about her position, the Crown Princess performed a *gosechi* 五節 dance at a banquet held in honor of Empress Emeritus 太上天皇 Genshō's inaugural visit to the new capital in Kuni 恭仁京 in 743.[251] Piggott interprets Abe's performance as a reminder to attendees about the legacy of women rulers who occupied the imperial throne.[252] Torquil Duthie, on the other hand, points out the dances' associations with Tenmu's reign in the *Shoku Nihongi*, which states that Abe's performance was meant to establish her as rightful successor to Tenmu's

[248] For a family tree, see Appendix C: Tachibana Lineage on page 217.

[249] SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 337.

[250] Piggott (1997), 257–58.

[251]SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 418–21.

[252] Piggott (1997), 257.

dynastic line.[253] Clearly, there was a political purpose for Princess Abe's performance of the *gosechi* dances in terms of establishing her right to rule.

In the meantime, Moroe continued to accumulate power and influence of his own. First, he successfully put down a rebellion instigated by Fujiwara no Hirotsugu in 740. In that same year the capital moved to Kuni, a region that belonged to Moroe and his family and away from lands owned by the Fujiwara lineage.[254] Finally, Moroe was promoted to Minister of the Left in 743, the same year Shōmu commissioned the construction of the Great Buddha 大仏 (*daibutsu*) at Tōdaiji 東大寺. All the while, his faction, composed of members from the Ōtomo, Saeki 佐伯, and Agata-Inukai 県犬養 lineages, promoted Prince Asaka as Shōmu's successor.[255]

The hopes of Moroe's faction to put Shōmu's only living son on the throne were dashed when Prince Asaka prematurely died in 744. While the circumstances of his death remain unknown, suspicion was cast on the Fujiwara faction, which had started gaining traction in terms of political power when Muchimaro's son, Fujiwara no Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂 (706–764), was promoted to the rank of councilor in 743.[256] It is at this point that Volume VI's narrative ends in terms of its alignment with the historical record of the *Shoku Nihongi*, but the political infighting did not end with Prince Asaka's death. Perhaps later events affected the compilation of this volume, though it is hard to say whether Volume VI was a contemporary book, or one edited together later.

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[253] Duthie, Torquil, "Yoshino and the Politics of Cultural Topography in Early Japan," *Monumenta Nipponica* 70, no. 2 (2015), 221–22.

[254] Naoki and Bock (1993), 252.

[255] Ibid., 251.

[256] Ibid, 253.

In any case, the point is that the historical context surrounding this volume is tumultuous and filled with political intrigue. Scholars often describe Volume VI as inspired by the content and function of Volumes I and II, namely in commemorating Emperor Shōmu's reign in the same manner as the reigns of Emperor Tenji, Jitō, and Monmu. Compared to the earlier volumes, however, a somber undertone runs throughout the Volume VI, particularly in the poems that constitute the Ōtomo subplot of the volume. A question pervades the volume as to the direction of the imperial household and the Yamato court in the face of perceived outsiders.

The Structure of Volume VI: The Tenpyō Period from Multiple Perspectives

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first six volumes of the *Man'yōshū* are characterized as "historical" volumes with dates interspersed throughout the text of each volume. In addition, most of the poems included also have a named author, and it is rare to see extended sequences of anonymous contributions. Volumes V and VI differ significantly from the preceding four books, however, in that the time frame they cover is shorter, limited to several years during the early period of Emperor Shōmu's reign. Though Volume V's representation is limited to Tabito and his affiliates during his tenure as Governor-General in Dazaifu between 728 and 730, Volume VI represents a broader variety of authors and locations.

The volume can be divided into roughly six or seven sections, and follows the general structure exhibited in Volume I through IV. The book begins with a series of poems by lower-ranking members of the court during excursions to various palaces, with repeated trips to the detached palace in Yoshino. It then transitions briefly to Dazaifu and Tabito's return to the capital. Compared to Volume V before it, Tabito and Okura's presence is minimal in Volume VI. There are only a handful of poems written by Tabito, and one authored by Okura during the year

he passed away. Next are a couple of sections that either highlight contributions from Sakanoue and other Ōtomo associates or focus on the activities of imperial princes. The second to last section features a fully grown Yakamochi in his first government post as an *udoneri* 内舎人. The final section contains exclusively poems from a no longer extant poetic collection belonging to Tanabe no Sakimaro 田辺福麻呂 (dates unknown). In other words, Volume VI follows a similar trajectory to Volume III in terms of who is central in the Ōtomo subplot as it moves from Tabito in his final years to Sakanoue as an interim leader before ending in Yakamochi's adulthood.

The Ōtomo subplot in Volume VI is relatively small as most of the book's focus is on major events within the larger context of Shōmu's court. Even there, however, the types of events and parties included reveal the use of multiple ideological principles in organizing this book. The first of these is concerned with memorializing the early years of Shōmu's reign and the excursions on which he embarked, echoing those of his ancestors. The second shows a clear bias toward representing the works of imperial princes over members of the Fujiwara clique, and in particular Tachibana no Moroe's faction. The final principle is motivated in showcasing the Ōtomo lineage's literary talents with a focus on Sakanoue. The following table makes all three of these organizing principles clear:

Section by Poems	Era Name and Year	Major Events Covered	Major Named Authors	Yakamochi's Age
I: Shōmu's ascension to the throne (Poems 907 – 954)	Yōrō 7 (723) – Jinki 5 (728)	Genshō's excursion to Yoshino. Shōmu's excursions to Kii Province, Yoshino, Naniwa, and Inamino. Confinement of nobles to palace guard house in Jinki 4 (727).	Kasa no Kanamura, Kurumamochi no Chitose, Yamabe no Akahito	Between 5 and 10 years old

II: Tabito's return to Nara and death (Poems 955 – 970)	Jinki 5 (728) – Tenpyō 3 (731), *skipping Tenpyō 1 (729)*	Dazaifu officials visit mausoleum of Emperor Chūai and Empress Consort Jingū. Ōtomo no Michitari is commanded to go down to Dazaifu. Ōtomo no Tabito and Sakanoue travel back to the capital.	Ōtomo no Tabito, Ono no Oyu, Fujii no Hironari, Ōtomo no Sakanoue, Koshima	Between 10 and 13 years old
III: Umakai's assignment as military commissioner of Saikaidō, Okura's death (Poems 971 – 978)	Tenpyō 4 (732) – Tenpyō 5 (733)	Imperial banquet in celebration of Umakai's new position (732). Okura's composition given to Fujiwara no Yatsuka.	Takahashi no Mushimaro, Shōmu or Genshō, Yamanoue no Okura	Between 14 and 15 years old
IV: "Sakanoue's Section" (Poems 979 – 995)	No dates given, assumed same as above	Sakanoue's trip out to Gangōji 元興寺	Ōtomo no Sakanoue, Abe no Mushimaro, Prince Yuhara, Prince Ichihara, Ōtomo no Yakamochi	Presumably the same age as above
V: Rise of the Tachibana Lineage (Poems 996 – 1028)	Tenpyō 6 (734)– Tenpyō 11 (739), *skipping Tenpyō 7 (735)*	Excursions to Naniwa (734) and Yoshino (736) Imperial banquet in honor of Prince Katsuragi's adopting the name of his mother's lineage (736). Sakanoue's trip to Kamo Shrine 賀茂神社	Yamabe no Akahito, Prince Funa, Shōmu or Genshō, Fujii no Hironari, Prince Kadobe, Tachibana no Moroe, Ōtomo no Sakanoue	Between 16 and 21 years old
VI: Yakamochi's time as an *udoneri* 内舎人 (Poems 1029 – 1046)	Tenpyō 12 (740)–Tenpyō 16 (744), *skipping Tenpyō 13 (741) and 14 (742)*	Procession to Ise during Fujiwara no Hirotsugu's rebellion. Capital moves to Kuni in Yamashiro. Banquet attended by Prince Asaka at	Ōtomo no Yakamochi, Shōmu, Prince Ichihara	Between 22 and 24 years old

		Fujiwara no Yatsuka's home. Excursion to Mount Ikuji for a drinking party.		
VII: Selections from the Tanabe no Sakimaro Collection (Poems 1047–69)	Dates unknown	No major events	Unknown	N/A

Despite its reputation as a book designed to memorialize Shōmu's reign, his presence in the volume is mainly confined to the paratextual elements of headnotes and endnotes. Even then, the editorial notes debate whether the "sovereign" mentioned is referring to him or his aunt Genshō. Only Poem 1030 explicitly attributes authorship to Shōmu. His presence in the volume instead overlays with the general role of the sovereign figure around whom court activity occurs. While the sovereign rarely speaks on their own, they can compel other courtiers to speak instead. Many of the poems recorded in the volume occur at the request of the sovereign, a role Shōmu inherits through birthright. This also means, however, that he does not necessarily exhibit his own individual literary protagonism.

Literary protagonism instead belongs to particular factions within Shōmu's court. Beyond the trio of Kanamura, Chitose, and Akahito in the first section, lower-ranking poets in service to the court, the majority of named poets in Volume VI are imperial princes or nobles aligned with them. Within these groups, Tachibana no Moroe's faction especially stands out. Not only are there a number of entries written by Moroe himself or members of his clique, but also many of the settings and events surrounding these poems are in honor of him or sponsored by his family. If Volume VI was compiled in part to commemorate Shōmu's reign, clearly it was done from the

perspective of one specific group. The poetic compositions from Moroe's group become the ones that shape the narrative surrounding the court during this time.

For one, there is no mention of Princess Abe's designation as Crown Princess in 738, nor a poem commemorating her *gosechi* performance in 743. Instead, the poems recorded for those years are a personal lament by the Gangōji Priest in Poem 1018 or a poem composed by Yakamochi in praise of the new capital in Kuni, which was located in Moroe's territory of Yamashiro.[257] Moreover, the final dated poems in the volume focus on Prince Asaka and his movements, from attending a banquet at the home of Fujiwara no Yatsuka to an excursion up Mount Ikuji for a drinking party. This mountain is heavily associated with the prince, given Yakamochi's lament for the prince in Volume III frequently mentions this location.[258] All in all, the focus on Prince Asaka and his demise, implicit in the fact that the volume drops all sense of chronology after 744, dampens any celebratory element that might have come forth in memorializing Shōmu's reign.

There is also a difference in how threats to the sovereign and their throne are portrayed in Volume VI, depending on who leads them. Prince Nagaya's Incident in 729 is not mentioned at all, and there is no poem recorded for that year. The only reference to the prince is through the inclusion of a composition by his son, Prince Kashiwade:

膳王歌一首
A poem by Prince Kashiwade

朝波(あしたには)　海邊尓安左里為(うみへにあさりし)	During the morning they catch food by the seashore,
暮去者(ゆふされば)　倭部超(やまとへこゆる)	When the evening comes, they climb up toward Yamato
鴈四乏母(かりしともしも)	How enviable, the geese!

[257] MYS VI, Poem 1037.

[258] MYS III, Poems 475–80. See the translation of Yakamochi's Elegy for the prince in the previous chapter.

右作歌之年不審也　但以歌類便載此次
As for [the above], the date of composition is unclear. However, because of song similarities, [this poem] is placed next.[259]

An expression of nostalgia for the ancestral homelands of Yamato, Poem 954 by Prince Kashiwade contains no historical contextualization in either the poem itself or the paratext surrounding it. In fact, the endnote states that the compiler (whoever it was) did not know the date of composition. Instead, they chose to place it following a sequence of poems by Kanamura and Chitose from an excursion to the Naniwa Palace in 728 based on similarities between the poems. In this case, the theme is "mountains" as Kanamura's Poems 950 through 953 include many images of crossing mountain ranges.

Poem 954 is not the only one of its kind to be placed where it is in the volume based on the principle of imagery rather than event. Such an example indicates multiple organzing principles throughout Volume VI, though its placement after poems composed in 728 makes an oblique reference to Prince Nagaya's regime during the first years of Shōmu's reign. In fact, some commentators choose to believe that the poem can be dated as around 728 and is about the excursion to Naniwa because of its placement in the volume.[260] As Shinada Yoshikazu points out, however, Volume VI's recording of a supposed procession to Naniwa in Jinki 5 does not have a corresponding entry in the *Shoku Nihongi*. In fact, the closest date given in that text is about a procession to Naniwa in Jinki 2.[261] This suggests that the compiler of Volume VI deliberately chose to rearrange history in order to create a particular representation of the court during that period. The absence of both dates and Prince Nagaya's presence obfuscates the historical realities

[259] MYS VI, Poem 954.

[260] See Omodaka 6, 101, and Itō 3 (1996), 354–55.

[261] Shinada Yoshikazu, "Yomu Nara no miyako shi omohoyuru kamo: hairetsu ga yobikomu mou hitotsu no myakuraku." *Nihon bungaku* 69, 12 (2020), 50.

of the court during this time. Readers who know Prince Kashiwade's father will understand the significance of including his poem as representing a lineage that lost many of its members following the tragic events of 729. Poem 954 becomes a somber inclusion given that history, despite the lack of immediate historical contextualization.

Conversely, the headnote for Poem 1029 describes Fujiwara no Hirotsugu's rebellion in Kyūshū, led by a courtier not affiliated with imperial princes as going against the imperial throne. Differences in which incidents are portrayed and how they are framed illuminate biases on a textual level. The Prince Nagaya Incident of 729, which involved nobles and princes aligned with the Ōtomo, is not used as a contextualizing framework, and only knowledgeable readers can figure out inferences to it. Fujiwara no Hirotsugu's Rebellion in 740 on the other hand, is historicized within the text of the *Man'yōshū*. It is framed as the catalyst for both the imperial procession to Ise as well as an opportunity for Yakamochi and other members of Tachibana no Moroe's faction to compose poetry commemorating that event. As pointed out by Itō Haku, the route taken by Shōmu's entourage during this pilgrimmage roughly follows the same path taken by Prince Ōama (later Emperor Tenmu) during his military campaign against Prince Ōtomo in 672.[262] It is clear that this was done in order to emulate his great-grandfather's successful campaign against a usurper and further legitimize Shōmu's sovereignty. The representation of this excursion in Volume VI is then designed to prop Shōmu up as righftul successor to the venerated Tenmu, and certain members of his court as inheritors of Tenmu's loyal retainers and followers. In other words, Hirotsugu's rebellion is portrayed as a threat to the realm and Tenmu's dynasty which must be protected, but Nagaya's alleged usurpation plot is not as he was descended from that lineage himself.

[262] Itō (1996), Vol. 3, 472.

Another section that occupies a strange space in Volume VI, however, is the one labeled in the chart above as "Section IV," or "Sakanoue's Section" for Poems 979 through 995. Just as many scholars have observed, this section contains no poems with recorded dates or large public events. Similar to the *hiyuka* section of Volume III, the poems in this section appear to have come from a private collection within the Ōtomo lineage, as many of the authors are either members of the family or some of their close associates. Just as with Prince Kashiwade's Poem 954, these poems appear to be grouped together based on imagery or social events rather than chronological or imperial events. The categories can be defined as "travel," "moon," or "banquet," all of which are defining features of the *zōka* poetic category. Though lacking in historical or chronological context themselves, these poems by Sakanoue and members of her clique are positioned between the events of Tabito's return to Nara, his death along with Okura's, and the rise of the Tachibana regime in toward the end of the 730s.

In the remainder of this chapter I explore the meaning of this section's inclusion, along with Sakanoue's contributions elsewhere in Volume VI, in terms of commemorating major events during Shōmu's reign and the Ōtomo lineage's position to the center of power during this period. Specifically, I argue that Sakanoue's contributions are included in order to obfuscate certain factions within the court while at the same time demonstrating her family's devotion to the throne. This portrayal differs from that of other poetic contributions by women in the volume in that Sakanoue displays a literary protagonism similar to her male counterparts as she travels the realm and even bears witness to an event at the palace. More so in Volume VI than in the previous books discussed, the figure of Sakanoue is tied to historical events and happenings within imperial history. That history is framed by a perspective that expresses ambivalence about the direction of the Yamato court during the mid-eighth century.

Homeward Bound: Poems 963 and 964 and Returning from Dazaifu

The Ōtomo subplot in Volume VI begins with the clan head, Tabito, already stationed in Dazaifu as its Governor-General 帥. A brief interlude from the activities of the capital, Tabito and his associates are depicted as performing duties as subjects of the state yet also longing to return home to the capital and to their sovereign's side. One such example is Poem 960 by Tabito, written while gazing at the Kyūshū landscape:

> 帥大伴卿遥思芳野離宮作歌一首
> *A poem made by the Governor-General Lord Ōtomo when thinking of the detached palace of Yoshino from afar*
>
> 隼人乃　湍門乃磐母　　Even the rocks in the Hayato sea channel
> 年魚走　芳野之瀧尓　　Cannot compare with the sight of the waterfall
> 尚不及家里　　In Yoshino where sweetfish run.[263]

Comparing the Kyūshū and Yoshino landscapes, Tabito's narrator expresses an obvious preference for the latter, and implies what Edwin Cranston calls "the superiority of the central power over the fractious periphery."[264] Poem 960 is in keeping with the conventional persona of a statesman longing to return to his sovereign's side rather than remaining on the edges of the realm. While performing his duties, Tabito's poetic output reaffirms his loyalty to the court and imperial family as well as its power and scope of influence.

The persona of a court noble yearning for the cosmopolitan center from their place in the hinterlands can also be found in some of Sakanoue's entries in Volume VI. This is a persona found in very few compositions by women as recorded in the *Man'yōshū* during the Tenpyō era,

[263] MYS VI, Poem 960.

[264] Cranston (1993), 333.

meaning that Sakanoue's poems in this mode stand out. They create an image of Sakanoue as highly mobile in comparison to other women writer counterparts in both her time and the Heian period. This also means that much previous scholarship is dedicated to tracing her movements and determining the veracity that Sakanoue traveled where the text says she did. One of the oft discussed events in Sakanoue's "life," as outlined by scholars, is the idea that she joined Tabito down in Dazaifu sometime after his wife passed away in 728. The evidence for this speculation comes from the headnote for Sakanoue's first poem recorded in Volume VI, Poem 963:

> 冬十一月大伴坂上郎女發帥家上道超筑前國宗形部名々兒山之時作歌一首
> *In Winter, the eleventh month, Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue composed a poem when she departed from the Governor of Dazaifu's house, went up the road, and climbed the mountain called Nago in the Munakata Province of Chikuzen.*

大汝(おほなむち)　小彦名能(すくなびこなの)	To be sure, the gods called Ōnamuchi and
神社者(かみこそば)　名著始鶏目(なづけそめけめ)	Sukunabiko long ago did name it, but
名耳乎(なのみを)　名兒山跡負而(なごやまとおひて)	Only the name is attached to Mount Nago.
吾戀之(あがこひの)　千重之一重(ちへのひとへも)裳	Not even one in a thousand layers of my longing
奈具佐米(なぐさめ)七國(なくに)	Is given any comfort.[265]

Poem 963 is a considerably short *chōka* at only nine lines in total. The notes immediately preceding the poem do not clearly indicate the year in which it was composed. The headnote for Fujii no Hironari's Poem 962, written on an occasion when Ōtomo no Michitari visits Dazaifu, is dated to Tenpyō 2 (730).[266] Therefore, it is generally assumed by commentators that Poem 963 and the subsequent composition by Sakanoue (Poem 964) are compositions from the same year.

[265] MYS VI, 963. Poem 963 contains a play-on-words that cannot be easily replicated in an English translation. In this poem, the name of the mountain (Nago) is associated with the verb *nagusamu* 慰む, or "to give comfort."

[266] Specifically, the headnote reads, "In the Second Year of Tenpyō, Metal Horse, a poem from the time when the messenger on a swift horse Ōtomo no Michitari was dispatched by imperial decree." 天平二年庚午　勅遣擢駿馬使大伴道足宿祢時歌一首

Combined with the description of Sakanoue as leaving Tabito's residence and heading up the road, Poem 963 and 964 are considered as definitive proof of her having lived in Dazaifu for a time. There is additional speculation that she might have composed poetry while at Tabito's residence, despite the fact that there are no works attributed to her in Volume V, a book dedicated solely to the works of Tabito, Okura, and their inner circle between 728 and 730.

The headnote preceding Poem 963 states that Sakanoue composed this poem while going over Mount Nago in the Munakata district of Chikuzen, presumably on a return trip home to the capital. The first six lines of this poem comprise a preface about the gods Ōnamuchi and Sukunabikona and their relationship with Mount Nago, while the last three lines describe the narrator's personal feelings of longing and sadness, though the object is unclear. The gods Ōnamuchi 大汝 and Sukunabikona 少彦名 often appear together in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki.*[267] Ōnamuchi is another name for the god Ōkuninushi-no-mikoto 大国主命, a heroic figure and central deity in Japanese mythology who ruled over Izumo, whereas Sukunabikona-no-mikoto 少彦名命 is a god of medicine and liquor that comes from the land of Tokoyo 常世.[268] As both of these gods come from realms distant to the lands of Yamato, their presence in the initial descriptions portray a sacred yet foreign space for Sakanoue's narrator.

Similar to many of Sakanoue's other poems, Poem 963 uses poetic predecessors as a source of inspiration. In this poem's case, various commentators speculate that it was most likely composed with the following poems in mind, both of which are found in Volume Seven's

[267] For passages where these figures appear, see the Ōkuninushi-no-mikoto section in the first volume 上巻 of the *Kojiki* (SNKBZ *Kojiki* 94–96).

[268] For an English-language translation and description of these gods, see Heldt, Gustav, *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

subsection of poems on the topic of travel (羈旅作 *kiryo saku*).[269] The first example, Poem 1247, comes from the Hitomaro Poetry Collection 柿本朝臣人麻呂歌集. The second, Poem 1213, is from an old collection of poetry 古集:

大穴道（おほあなみち）　少御神（すくなみかみの）	Looking up at Mount Imose, created by
作（つくらしし）　妹勢能山（いもせのやまを）	The great gods Ōanamichi and Sukuna,
見吉（みらくしよしも）	Is such a good feeling!
名草山（なぐさやま）　事西在来（ことにしありけり）	Nagusayama was merely its name;
吾戀（あがこふる）　千重一重（ちへのひとへも）	Not even one in a thousand layers of my longing
名草目名國（なぐさめなくに）	Was given any comfort.[270]

Volume Seven, a book also dedicated to miscellaneous poems, contains samples from no longer extant poetry collections. Anonymous poems such as the two above often share similar motifs and literary devices with poems by named authors, which gives the impression that the latter poems were inspired by the former. It is clear that the first four lines of Sakanoue's 963 are reminiscent of the first two lines in Poem 1247, which Aso Mizue classifies as belonging to a subcategory of poems that can best be described as praises for natural features encountered during travel.[271] In Poem 963, the gods serve as preface words for the image of Mount Nagoya, which is the focus subject, instead of being the subjects of praise as shown in Poem 1247. The last five lines of Poem 963 also find inspiration in Poem 1213 and have almost the exact same reading for the last three lines ("not even one in a thousand layers of my longing is/was given any comfort").

[269] For example, see Onodera (1993).

[270] Like Poem 963, Poem 1213 contains a play-on-words with the name of the mountain, *Nagu*sa, and the verb *nagusamu*.

[271] Aso Mizue (1992), 130. The phrase in Japanese is 旅中の風物に対する讃嘆.

Previous scholarship provides a number of interpretations for Poem 963 based on its similarities to the poems shown above. For example, Itō Haku believes Poem 963 to be an example of poetry about religious practices related to travel (羈旅信仰 *kiryo shinkō*), where the traveler composes a poem in order to perform a pacification, or *chinkon* 鎮魂. According to Itō, by taking objects such as mountains or gods, one praises nature, recalls their homeland, or mourns those who have passed away.[272] Based on the preface and the first four lines of Poem 963, one would think that, similar to the Poem 1247, the speaker in Sakanoue's poem is offering up praise to the mountain and the gods that created it. By referring to Poem 1213 in the latter half of her poem, however, Sakanoue's narrator seems to harbor negative feelings toward mountain instead of revering it. Using a play on words with the mountain's name, *Nago* and the verb *nagusamu*, the reason for the subject's feelings become clear. Though the gods in giving the mountain its name also gave it the apparent power to comfort others, it is in name only as the subject's longing is not actually quelled by the mountain. Poem 963 not only combines the subject of Poem 1247 with the speaker's sentiments in Poem 1213, but also creates a different kind of poem and speaker by building upon a poetic tradition. Sakanoue does not merely mimic older poetry, but also adds a twist to her rendition. In doing so, she creates a literary network where poems are both separated and yet connected via motifs and themes.

In regard to historical background on this poem, it has been generally assumed that Tabito's wife, Lady Ōtomo 大伴郎女, along with Sakanoue's husband Sukunamaro passed away by Jinki 5 (728), and Sakanoue afterwards moved down to Dazaifu to raise a young Yakamochi

[272] Itō Haku, "Ōmi no kōto ka no bungakuteki no ishiki," *Man'yōshū no kajin to sakuhin* (Tōkyō: Hanawa shobō, 1975).

and look after Tabito.[273] Tabito would move back to the capital two years later, however, in order to take up the post of *dainagon* 大納言 ("senior counselor"). This information cannot be found in the *Shoku Nihongi,* as it does not give a specific date for his appointment. The history only mentions the year in which Tabito passes away, having attained the rank of *dainagon*, junior second rank.[274] Rather, it is the headnote for the opening poem in Volume 17 of the *Man'yōshū* (Poem 3890) that mentions Tabito's promotion. It also marks the date of his journey as being the eleventh month of Tenpyō 2:

> 天平二年庚午冬十一月大宰帥大伴卿被任大納言［兼帥如舊］　上京之時傔従等別取海路入京
> *In Winter, the eleventh month of Tenpyō 2*, *Earth-Senior/Horse, the Governor of Dazaifu was entrusted with the position of* dainagon *(he held two positions concurrently). When he returned home to the capital, his attendants took a separate sea route to return to the capital.*[275]

This coincides with the date ascribed for Poem 963. Based on the information provided in the headnotes for Poems 963 and 3890, this means that Sakanoue and Tabito either traveled together, or she headed back to a capital ahead of him. Given that it states in Poem 963's preface that she "departed from the Governor of Dazaifu's house," this phrasing suggests that Sakanoue left Dazaifu ahead of Tabito.

Not all scholars accept the information of the headnotes as historical fact, and in fact some find it to contain contradictions with the poem itself. In ascertaining the possible routes Sakanoue could have taken from Dazaifu back to the capital, Kajikawa Nobuyuki determines that she likely did not climb the mountain in reality.[276] Rather, Sakanoue used the image of the

[273] See Doe (1982), Itō (1996), or Onodera (1996) for examples of this theory.

[274] See entry for Seventh Month of Tenpyō 2, *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 246–47.

[275] Headnote to MYS XVII, Poem 3890.

[276] See Kajikawa Nobuyuki (2001), 155–82, for his entire argument.

gods and the mountain to create her own legend and as a means to express her longing.[277] Asano Noriko similarly proposes in her interpretation of Poem 963 that, even though Mount Nago is specifically mentioned, the poem is not about this particular mountain. Instead, by tying the image of the mountain to the speaker's longing and alleged feelings of love, the actual mountain's characteristics disappear, and it becomes a symbol tied to the narrator's passions and longing.[278] In other words, Asano abstracts both the mountain and the poetic persona within Poem 963, relegating this poem to a purely literary space. In this way, one could think of Sakanoue's poem as occupying the same abstract realm as Volume Seven's anonymous travel poems, and in particular Poems 1247 and 1213 from which it so clearly draws inspiration.

There are a few issues with these interpretations, however, in their treatment of the headnote as it relates to Poem 963. Asano completely disregards the context provided by the headnote in favor of arguing for its position in an intertextual literary network. While Poem 963's connection to older songs from the Hitomaro collection are valuable in establishing that poetry circulated among at least the aristocracy in the eighth century, its headnote makes it clear that the compilers intended to frame Poem 963 within a larger narrative about Tabito and the Ōtomo lineage's return to the court in Nara after years away, during a time when much had changed. Specifically, the aftermath of the Prince Nagaya Incident in 729, which resulted in Nagaya's death along with many members of his family and significantly changed the social fabric of the court to the point that Fuhito's sons occupied most of the high-ranking positions. Though Tabito's promotion to *dainagon* would have been a source of personal and familial pride, it is also bittersweet as he along with his family are on a journey back to an unfavorable

[277] Ibid., 178.

[278] Asano (1994), 98.

situation. The narrator's longing as described in Sakanoue's Poem 963 cannot be comforted due to her family's uncertain future at the capital.

Meanwhile, Kajikawa places too much emphasis on the question of whether Sakanoue actually climbed the mountain. I agree with his judgment that scholarship too readily accepts the information provided by headnotes and endnotes as reflecting historical reality. I do not think there is much to be gained from ascertaining the veracity of paratextual elements, however. Rather, we can and should consider how they frame the author within the text, and what kind of "story" is being told. From the headnote to Poem 3890 in Volume XVII, the first of several books to come from Yakamochi's private collection, the reader learns that Tabito's household purportedly went home in two separate groups. The headnote for Poem 963 establishes Sakanoue as a member of one of those groups and positions her not as a woman looking at a mountain while longing for a lover, but as a traveling courtier thinking of others on her way back to the capital. As suggested in the last paragraphs of Kajikawa's treatment of Poem 963, Sakanoue's person currently travels through the "barbaric" 夷 region near Mount Nago on her way back to the civilized center of her world, Heijō-kyō, a land that is insufficient in bringing her comfort.[279] Kajikawa states that the reason for this is because she is a woman from the capital, but I also think there is an additional layer of political meaning. As a subject of the Yamato sovereign, whose influence radiates from the center of civilization, of course mountains in the hinterlands could never be sufficient for Sakanoue, just as the sea channel in Kyūshū for Tabito could never compare to the waterfall at Yoshino.

[279] Kajikawa (2001), 180.

Sakanoue's journey continues through the next poem, a *tanka* poem that commentators believe was composed during the same trip back to the capital. It is recorded that, after looking at seashells on the beach, Sakanoue composed the following poem:

> 同坂上郎女向京海路見濱貝作歌一首
> *The same Lady Sakanoue composed a poem when she was on the sea route heading toward the capital and looked at shells on the beach.*
>
> 吾背子尓 (わがせこに) 戀者苦 (こふればくるし) — When I long for my young man, it is painful.
> 暇有者 (いとまあらば) 拾而将去 (ひりひてゆかむ) — If there is time to spare, I shall go gather them!
> 戀忘貝 (こひわすれがひ) — Shells used to forget this longing.[280]

Similar to Poem 963 preceding it, Sakanoue's Poem 964 about gathering shells along the seashore occupies a shared literary space with other poems in the *Man'yōshū* through the use of the word *koiwasuregai* 恋忘貝, which has been translated here as "shells used to forget longing." There are three other examples of this term in the *Man'yōshū*. One of them, from Volume Seven's "Settsu Compositions" 攝津作 (*Settsu* saku) section is very similar to Poem 964:

> 暇有者 (いとまあらば) 拾尓将徃 (ひりひにゆかむ) — If there is time to spare, I shall go gather them!
> 住吉之 (すみのえの) 岸因云 (きしによるといふ) — Shells used to forget longing, which are said to come
> 戀忘貝 (こひわすれがひ) — To the shore of Sumiyoshi.[281]

There are only two differences between Sakanoue's version and this one. First, Poem 1147's setting is specific. It is placed in a section of poems about the Settsu Province and, on top of that, describes Sumiyoshi as a shore where these special shells wash ashore. This poem focuses on the locale and the shells themselves. Neither Sakanoue's Poem 964 nor the preface that precedes it give any hint as to her location, however. It only mentions that she is on "a sea route." Second,

[280] MYS VI, Poem 964.

[281] MYS VII, Poem 1147.

Poem 1147's speaker implies that their current emotional state is troubled, since they desire to go gather shells to alleviate their longing. Sakanoue's version, however, makes this state explicit by exclaiming the pain they feel as they long for an absent loved one. The focus is on the speaker and their feelings of longing rather than the scenery they encounter on their journey.

Notably, the person they are thinking of is a man as the speaker refers to them as *wa ga seko* 我が背子, translated here as "my young man." This can either refer to a close male relative or lover, though the term more often is interpreted as referring to the latter than the former. Asano Noriko argues that the setting for Poem 964, presumably from the same trip as Poem 963 given their placement side-by-side, provides a backdrop or source of inspiration for a love poem. Furthermore, she maintains that although the historical figure of Sakanoue resided in the same area as Tabito's Dazaifu poetry circle, her poems are in another poetic world with a different set of themes and motifs, and devoid of the political concerns that run through some of Tabito and Okura's poetry, especially in Volume Five where many of their poems focus on the distance from Dazaifu to the capital.[282] Within this realm, the abstract figure of the woman emerges, a persona whose primary concerns are related to love and relations with the opposite sex.

I am not sure that is entirely the case for Poems 963 and 964, however. Taken individually, it is natural to argue that these poems showcase the persona of a feminine figure pining for someone who is in all likelihood a lover. If we examine Poems 963 and 964 together along with their paratexts and consider the poetic speaker in each of these poems to be one and the same, the answer changes. In Poem 963, the speaker lodges her complaint against the mountain for being unable to live up to its namesake and comfort her. As clearly indicated by the description of "one in a thousand layers," her longing is severe and potent. She does not identify

[282] Asano (1994), 107.

the object of her longing, but the speaker is clearly distressed. In Poem 964, we see a shift in the speaker's feelings from that of sorrow and anger over the inability of others to soothe her longing into a resolve to end the painful feelings by gathering seashells that will help them forget their beloved. It is as if the compiler of Volume Six placed Poems 963 and 964 side by side to create a singular overarching narrative between the two. Though the two poems are not immediately connected, as Poem 964 is not a *hanka* to 963's *chōka*, together they create a story about Sakanoue's return to the capital in which she is consumed by longing, frustration, and the desire to resolve these negative emotions.

As the term *wagaseko* can be used to refer to any male person with whom the speaker has a close relation, one could argue that the object of longing is Tabito or Yakamochi. Since there is no way to confirm an identity, however, it is better to argue that the persona for Poems 963 and 964 is more akin to the figure of a traveling noble missing their loved ones as they make their journey across unfamiliar territory. Similar to Poems 5 – 6 in Volume I by Lord Ikusa describing his yearning for his wife while traveling with the emperor, or the feelings of homesickness described by members of a diplomatic mission to Silla in Volume XV,[283] Sakanoue's poems display the impact of travel on her emotions yet also demonstrate her devotion to her duties as a member of her brother's household. Poems 963 and 964 situate themselves within a literary network established by particular poetic personas and, at the same time, commemorate her family's return to their rightful place at the center of the realm.

[283] See Duthie (2014), 236–41, for a translation and analysis of MYS I, Poems 5–6, and Horton (2012), 10–44, for a full translation of the Silla sequence.

A Brief Interlude into the Poetic Realm: Poems 979–95 as "Sakanoue's Section"

Though characterized primarily as a book organized by historical events, Volume VI has a couple of sections where dates disappear from the text, and time is suspended as a result. The first of these sections begins after Poem 978, a poem that Okura allegedly composes and sends to Fujiwara no Yatsuka while ill and reads as if he were on his deathbed.[284] Following this portrayal of Okura's passing, only a few poems after Poem 970 which also functions as a symbol of Tabito's death, is a series of poems from 979 to 995 included in the volume that have no calendrical reference, seemingly composed in private contexts such as banquets or personal travel. Itō Haku labels this part of Volume VI as "Sakanoue's Section."[285] One obvious reason for this title is that Sakanoue is the the most prominent contributor with seven poems attributed to her name. The rest of the authors are either Sakanoue's relatives (Ahe no Mushimaro, Yakamochi), known associates of the Ōtomo lineage (Fujiwara no Yatsuka), poets from a region in Kyūshū (a woman called Ōyake), or Prince Shiki's descendants (Prince Yuhara, Prince Ichihara).[286] The connections drawn between these authors and Sakanoue or Yakamochi helps to center the family again and is reminiscent of Volume III's *hiyuka* section or the long sequences of exchanges between Ōtomo affiliates in Volume IV.

Poems 979 through 995 as a section possess their own unique features and can be roughly organized into three distinct poetic categories of moon poetry, travel poetry, or banquet poetry. Unlike even other banquet poems found in other parts of Volume VI, these poems are not historicized, appearing as if they were composed in private settings or drinking parties. The three

[284] For an English translation, see Cranston (1993), 372.

[285] Itō (1996), Vol. 3, 416.

[286] For a basic family tree, see Appendix D on page 218 in this dissertation.

travel poems (990 through 992) written by Sakanoue and Ki no Mikahito 紀鹿人, Lady Ki's father, also seem to have been composed during personal travel, as there is no mention of a royal procession. In other words, this section exists outside the frameworks of imperial time and discursive space that define other parts of Volume VI. "Sakanoue's Section" instead represents the works of the Ōtomo lineage and other members in their circle as examples of poetic practice in the early eighth century. By also focusing on the literary activities of Sakanoue and a young Yakamochi, this section continues the trend of representing the Ōtomo as loyal subjects with literary talents through Sakanoue and lays the groundwork for Yakamochi's eventual reappearance as the narrator for Shōmu's excursions in the latter half of the volume.

"Sakanoue's Section" begins by establishing its foundational relationship between Sakanoue and Yakamochi. It is composed at an unknown date but presumably around 732 or 733, since the rest of Volume VI is organized chronologically. Sakanoue apparently sends it with her nephew when he leaves the Saho residence:

> 大伴坂上郎女与姪家持従佐保還歸西宅歌一首
> *A poem Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue gave her nephew Yakamochi when he returned to the Western Residence from Saho.*
>
> 吾背子我 (わがせこが) 著衣 薄 (けるきぬうすし) — The robes that my dear young man wears are threadbare, so
> 佐保風者 (さほかぜは) 疾 莫吹 (いたくなふきそ) — Please do not harshly blow, winds of Saho,
> 及家左右 (いへにいたるまで) — Until he has arrived home.[287]

The poem's message is straightforward in stating the narrator's desire that the young man remains safe during his travels. If the placement of this poem follows the rough chronological principle used to organize other parts of Volume VI, then Yakamochi is around fifteen or sixteen years old during the time of its composition in 732 or 733. This date also matches the date of

[287] MYS VI, Poem 979.

composition given for the God-Worshiping Song (Poems 379 and 380) recorded in Volume III. Furthermore, there is an implication in the headnote of this poem that Sakanoue, if not an actual clan leader as some scholars have suggested through her portrayal in the God-Worshiping Song, at least resided in the Ōtomo lineage's main residence at Saho following Tabito's death.

Saho is a notable landscape that is regularly featured in Sakanoue's body of work. As discussed with her exchange with Fujiwara no Maro in Chapter One, it becomes heavily associated with the Ōtomo lineage in the *Man'yōshū*. In particular, the area is identified with Sakanoue's father and Yakamochi's grandfather, Yasumaro, as the headnote for Poem 126 in Volume II and the endnote to Poem 528 in Volume IV identifies him as the "Saho Councilor." 佐保大納言 This space, therefore, comes to have great importance for the family as depicted throughout the anthology, and Sakanoue's position from within Saho is symbolic of her power within the family structure.

Commentaries on Poem 979 often speculate about the use of the term *wagaseko* in Poem 979. Since it is often used in poems classified as "love songs," scholars mention its seemingly peculiar use in the above poem sent from aunt to nephew. While mentioning the potential erotic connotations associated with the term, Higashi Shigemi is quick to state that reading romantic feelings into the poem would be an exaggeration of its meaning and intent.[288] Edwin Cranston similarly interprets Poem 979 as an expression of Sakanoue's "motherly feelings" toward Yakamochi, though he prefaces this statement with a claim that Sakanoue has a "tendency to define her relationships in amorous terms."[289] I prefer to adopt the more generalized (and accepted) meaning of *wagaseko* as a term of endearment used for someone with whom the

[288] Nakanishi, ed. (1998), 124.

[289] Cranston (1993), 409–10.

speaker has a close relationship, as it is also often used in exchanges between men.[290] It is safe to say that Sakanoue's poems depict her as having great affection for her nephew, but there are pitfalls with reading more into Poem 979 beyond an understanding of their relationship as a close, familial bond.

Other scholars have questioned whether Poem 979 has any connection to the developing relationship between Yakamochi and the Elder Daughter, which Sakanoue seems to be invested in facilitating the relationship based on her poems in Volume IV. Hadano Takekuni proposes that the robe in the first two lines of Poem 979 is meant to refer to the robes wives often made for their husbands during premodern Japan.[291] Thus a "threadbare robe" would symbolize a weak relationship or marriage and be an observation of Yakamochi's lack of commitment to Sakanoue's daughter. Though Yoshii Iwao highlights Hadano's theory as part of his commentary on the poem for the *Man'yōshū zenchū* 万葉集全注, he believes that the last three lines of the poem lighten the severity of the first two lines, and give a warm and casual impression.[292] Indeed, it is difficult to read Poem 979 as an expression of Sakanoue's disappointment in Yakamochi as compared to Poem 585 in Volume IV where she asks someone directly why they must leave their wife instead of staying when they long for their wife.[293] Again, Poem 979 works well enough as an expression of concern over Yakamochi's well-being without looking for a deeper hidden meaning.

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[290] For examples of this, see MYS III, Poem 247 by Lord Ishikawa addressed to Prince Nagata (Translation in Levy [1981], 155), and MYS XVII, Poem 3975 by Ōtomo no Ikenushi addressed to Yakamochi (English translation in Cranston [1993], 612)

[291] Hadano Takekuni, "Keru kinu usushi kō" *Kokugakuin zasshi* (1938). Quoted from Yoshii Iwao, *Man'yōshū zenchū* 6 (1984), 155.

[292] *Zenchū* (1984), 155.

[293] See Page 56 of this dissertation for a translation and analysis after.

That being said, there is something particular about the emphasis on the winds of Saho along with the contextualization of the poem as an item with Yakamochi as he departs his aunt's home. In her article on the use of geographical expressions 地名表現 (*chimei hyōgen*) in women's poetry recorded in the *Man'yōshū*, Noguchi Keiko mentions that Saho is a region where high-ranking nobles were concentrated, and so becomes a focal point in women's poetry.[294] Located to the east of the capital, the neighborhood in some ways functions as a center of the world according to members of the aristocracy, though obviously not superseding the palace where the sovereign resides. Yakamochi's departure from his aunt's home located in the heart of that culture, along with its symbolic importance to the Ōtomo lineage, is reminiscent of the journey courtiers undergo into the hinterlands then. Granted, Yakamochi's journey to the "western residence," presumably on the western side of the capital, is a far cry from the wilds of the Kyūshū or Hokuriku regions to which he travels later in life. Within the microcosm of the family, however, leaving Saho is leaving the comforts of home, and Sakanoue is portrayed as concerned over Yakamochi's lack of preparation with his insufficient clothing. As an introduction into the private poetic world of the Ōtomo, Poem 979 establishes Sakanoue at its center and her relationship with Yakamochi as its focal point.

The next sequence in "Sakanoue's Section" revolves around the topic of the moon, which later becomes a staple in *waka* poetry. Over the course of seven poems, both male and female authors compose poetry inspired by its image. Within this section, three poems by Sakanoue are recorded as follows:

大伴坂上郎女月歌三首
Three poems on the moon by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

[294] Noguchi (2007), 32.

獦高乃　高圓山乎	Is it because of how high Mount Takamato
高弥鴨　出来月乃	In Karitaka is? The moon coming forth will be
遅将光	Late within its shining.
烏玉　夜霧立而	A mist has risen in the night, glistening black.
不清　照有月夜乃	When I look at the moon, its light dimly shining,
見者悲沙	I feel a deep sadness.
山葉　左佐良榎壮子	It is good to see the light of the gentle moon
天原　門度光	As he comes out from the edge of the mountain and
見良久之好藻	Crosses the fields of Heaven!

右一首歌或云　月別名曰佐散良衣壮士也　縁此辞作此歌
As for the one poem [above], a source says that another name for the moon is "sasaraeotoko." Inspired by the word, [she] made this poem.[295]

The first three lines in Poem 981 repeat the word *taka* 高 ("tall," "high"), emphasizing the landscape as an obstacle for the narrator's moon-viewing activities. As observed in the poem, this will mean that the moon will arrive late, as if it were a person coming late to a party. Multiple scholars have noted the similarities between Sakanoue's Poem 981 and the poem by her cousing Abe no Mushimaro that precedes it. His poem is recorded as follows:

安倍朝臣蟲麻呂月歌一首
A poem on the moon by Ahe no ason Mushimaro

雨隠　三笠乃山乎	Rain-sheltering Mount Mikasa is so high—
高御香裳　月乃不出来	Perhaps that's why the moon has yet to come up over it,
夜者更降管	Even while night wastes away.[296]

[295] MYS VI, Poems 981–983.

[296] MYS VI, Poem 980. Translation from Cranston (1993), 396–97.

Though it does not contain the same repetitive qualities in the use of the word *taka* as Sakanoue's Poem 981, the narrator in Mushimaro's Poem 980 also observes that the mountain's height is affecting their ability to see the moon deep into the night. According to Itō, Mount Takamato and Mount Mikasa lie in the same direction toward Kasuga, suggesting that Mushimaro and Sakanoue might have composed their poems during the same moon-viewing party.[297] Certainly the similarities in theme and subject matter between Poems 980 and 981 justify their placement together in both Sakanoue's Section and Volume VI in general.

The tone of Poem 982 by Sakanoue continues the mood described in Poem 981 as the narrator feels sad at the dimness of the moon's light. With the mist covering it, it cannot shine as bright as it might under different circumstances. Poem 982 expresses a type of longing and sadness that is often associated with love songs. As Hamada Mayumi points out, however, moon poems do not express the manifestation of love, but rather of waiting in longing as what seems to be popular in Sakanoue's time.[298] This means that the position of Poem 982's speaker can be interpreted as that of a woman waiting in vain for her lover to visit. The use of the term *sasaraeotoko* 佐散良衣壮士 in Poem 983 genders the moon as masculine and, if one were to adopt the traditional (heteronormative) line of thinking, gender the speaker of the entire sequence as feminine. With the assumption that a woman feels deep sadness because a male lover is late in visiting her, Poems 981 through 983 can be interpreted as love poems written in a traditional feminine mode.

The issue with the above interpretation, however, is that there are no clear indicators of gender besides the use of the term *sasaraeotoko* in Sakanoue's moon poems. As Hamada points

[297] Itō 6 (1996), 401.

[298] Hamada (2001), 5.

out, Sakanoue's poems contain no vocabulary that indicate an object of affection or longing when compared to other moon poems in Sakanoue's Section.[299] For example, the only other poem written by a woman among Poems 980 through 987 explicitly mentions the figure of a *kimi* ("lord"):

> 豊前國娘子月歌一首[娘子字曰大宅姓氏未詳也]
> *A poem on the moon by a maiden from Buzen Province*
> *The maiden's personal name is Ōyake. Her designation and lineage are unknown.*
>
> 雲隠(くもがくり)　去方乎(ゆくへを)無跡(なみと)　Hidden in the clouds, where it goes we cannot say,
> 吾戀(あがこふる)　月哉君之(つきをやきみが)　But I yearn for it—the moon, my love, are you eager
> 欲見(みまくほり)為流(する)　To gaze on it as I?[300]

Not only is there a direct referral to a male figure within the above poem, but the maiden also uses the phrase *mimaku hori suru* 見まく欲りする ("Are you eager to gaze on it?"). As this phrase implies sexual desire through an erotic gaze, Ōyake's poem provides a clear example of how a love poem utilizes the image of the moon to express desire. Sakanoue's poems by comparison are much more ambiguous as to the nature of their sadness and longing.

The image of the *sasaraeotoko* in Poem 983 is one of the most interesting elements in Sakanoue's sequence of moon poems, as it is the only use of the term in the entire *Man'yōshū*. It also becomes the entire crux of meaning for the sequence in my opinion. As the endnote for Poem 983 states, the term is allegedly another name for the moon. In addition, it evokes the specific image of a gentle male youth according to various commentaries. With this understanding of the term's meaning, Hamada interprets Poem 983 as a description of a young male lover.[301] This is a definite possibility as the narrator in Sakanoue's Poem 983 similarily

[299] Ibid. 9–10.

[300] MYS VI, Poem 984. Translation from Cranston (1993), 380.

[301] Hamada (2011), 8.

gazes on his form as the narrator in Ōyake's Poem 984.

Considering that the moon in this instance is meant to call to mind the image of a *young* man, however, is it possible to interpret the figure of the moon in Poem 983, and Sakanoue's sequence as a whole, as about Yakamochi? Though without any dates recorded therein, Poems 979 through 995 of "Sakanoue's Section" are generally assumed to have been composed between 732 and 733. This makes Yakamochi around fifteen years old, qualifying him as a youth. Furthermore, there are a few other instances where Yakamochi is associated with the moon. One example comes later in "Sakanoue's Section" where two poems composed by Sakanoue and Yakamochi on the subject of the moon are recorded side-by-side:

同坂上郎女初月歌一首
A poem by the same Lady Sakanoue on the new moon

月立而　直三日月之　The new moon rises. I simply scratched these eyebrows
眉根掻　氣長戀之　Shaped like crescent moons, and I have met with my lord
君尓相有鴨　For whom I have longed many days!

大伴宿祢家持初月歌一首
A poem by Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi on the new moon

振仰而　若月見者　When I look up and gaze at the crescent moon there,
一目見之　人乃眉引　I am reminded of the shape of their eyebrows,
所念可聞　That person whom I once glimpsed![302]

As the headnote for Yakamochi's poem does not indicate that his was composed in response to Sakanoue's contribution, it is unclear whether these poems were composed at the same time. An anthological reason for their placement together, however, is because they are both on the same

[302] MYS VI, Poems 993 and 994.

subject of the "new moon" and the inclusion of the moon in its crescent form. Here both Sakanoue and Yakamochi adopt what could be described as traditional feminine and masculine voices of a woman expressing elation at her lover finally arriving and a man longing for a woman he saw ever so briefly.[303] Of course, this does not necessarily imply an incestuous undertone to their relationship. Rather, it establishes a connection between Yakamochi's early compositions and Sakanoue's body of work as examples of Tenpyō era court poetry and their close association with each other in this section of Volume VI.

As Sakanoue and Yakamochi's relationship is the focal point of "Sakanoue's Section" in Volume VI, Poems 981 through 983 can possibly be interpreted as a metaphor for Yakamochi and Sakanoue's anxiety over his future as a leading figure of the Ōtomo lineage. As the mountain over which the moon must rise is very tall in Poem 981, Yakamochi must overcome career obstacles such as Fujiwara domination at court during this time. The image of moonlight dimmed by the presence of fog in Poem 982 further serves the metaphor, as the young hero Yakamochi's brilliance is muted by the presence of other high-powered factions. Finally, he is able to come out into full view of the court, just as the moon crosses the fields of heaven in Poem 983. A few entries later, Yakamochi's first appearance in Volume VI is recorded, and it also might be the earliest of his over four hundred contributions to the *Man'yōshū*. Sakanoue's preceding poems usher in one of the anthology's main literary protagonists all the while.

The rest of Sakanoue's contributions to this section of Volume VI further develop an image of her as leading figure with the Ōtomo lineage who participates in the memorialization of the Japanese court. Recorded right before her and Yakamochi's poems on the subject of the new

[303] It does not escape my attention that Yakamochi's Poem 994 evokes the image of *kaimami* that noblemen in Heian period literature engaged in while courting potential lovers, but I hesitate to call it an early example of this literary trope.

moon is a poem on the topic of the Gangōji temple 元興寺:

> 大伴坂上郎女詠元興寺之里歌一首
> *A poem Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue composed on the ruins of Gangōji*
>
> 古郷之 飛鳥者雖有 Although there is the ancestral land of Asuka,
> 青丹吉 平城之明日香乎 How good it is to see Asuka within
> 見樂思好裳 Nara of the blue-green earth![304]

According to a number of commentaries, Gangōji temple is located in what is now a town called Shibanoshinya 芝新屋町 in modern-day Nara. Originally built in 588 on the Makami plains in Asuka by Soga no Umako 蘇我馬子 (551? – 626) as Asuka Temple 飛鳥寺 or Hōkōji 法興寺, the temple was eventually relocated to Heijōkyō in 718.[305] The poem's description of "two Asukas" refers to this historical fact about the temple's relocation along with the capital. Poem 992 is a relatively straightforward poem in its reverence of the current capital while still acknowledging its connection to the old capital. Compared to Tabito's poems where he expresses a desire to return to ancestral lands, the narrator in Sakanoue's Poem 992 chooses to focus on the present and praise the land in which the sovereign currently resides.

This recurring theme regarding the passage of time continues in Sakanoue's last contribution to this section of Volume VI, a poem that was allegedly composed during a family banquet 親族の宴 (*ugara no utage*).[306] As one of the only examples of poetry written in this specific type of setting, Sakanoue's banquet poetry reveals that private drinking parties among family members of both genders were conducted during this time period. Numbered as Poem

[304] MYS VI, Poem 992.

[305] For more information in Japanese, see Yoshii (1984), 174, and Itō (1996), Vol. 3, 411.

[306] Other examples with this classification include MYS III, Poem 401, and MYS VIII, Poem 1656.

995 in most editions, the following poem reads as if it were an opening address to guests at a party:

> 大伴坂上郎女宴親族歌一首
> *A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue during a banquet with her relatives*
>
> 如是為乍（かくしつつ）　遊飲與（あそびのみこそ）　Just as such, enjoy yourselves and drink!
> 草木尚（くさきすら）　春者生管（はるはおひつつ）　Even the grass and trees, though they flourish in the spring,
> 秋者落去（あきはちりゆく）　Come Autumn, will wither and fall.[307]

Itō Haku observes similarities between the above poem and one of Tabito's compositions in Volume III in terms of their themes of ephemerality and sensual abandonment.[308] Just as with her brother's treatise on the joys of drinking alcohol in Volume III, Sakanoue in Poem 995 appears to abandon worldly concerns for the sake of enjoying the company of her family. Though the above poem does not contain overt references to Sinitic classical poetry, it still displays an awareness of how banquets facilitate the creating of a cultural community. As a capstone to the "Sakanoue Section" of Volume VI, Poem 995 serves as a reminder that all things have their season, and that the only constant is change itself. This message is apt in light of the historical events covered (or not) during the next section, where the volume returns to a chronological framework.

[307] MYS VI, Poem 995.

[308] Itō (1996), Vol. 3, 415. For the poem in question, see MYS III, Poem 349. It reads, "Every living man is a creature that at last/Must come to die—so while I'm here in this world/I'd like to have some fun." (Cranston [1993], 336)

Sakanoue's Poetry during the Rise of Tachibana no Moroe

The next section of Volume VI, from Poems 996 through 1028, can be described as a depiction of Prince Katsuragi's "rebirth" as Tachibana no Moroe and his ascension to political and cultural power at Shōmu's court during the latter half of the 730s. After a series of poems from imperial proceedings to the detached palaces at Naniwa and Yoshino in Tenpyō 6 (734) and Tenpyō 8 (736), the next major historical event recorded is Prince Katsuragi's adoption of his mother's lineage name, "Tachibana," in the 11th month of Tenpyō 8. Two poems composed by the sovereign (exact authorship unknown) and Katsuragi's son, Naramaro, at a banquet hosted in his half-sister Empress Consort Kōmyō's residence commemorate the event.[309] From here, there are no public banquets sanctioned by the sovereign recorded in this section of Volume VI. Instead, there are poems recorded from banquets hosted by Moroe, Prince Kadobe 門部王 (d. 745), and Kose no Sukunamaro 巨勢少麻呂 (dates unknown).[310] Notably, the Fujiwara lineage's presence is nonexistant in this section as there are no poems recorded from any member, including frequent Ōtomo associate, Yatsuka.

There are a few explanations for the lack of Fujiwara presence in this section of Volume VI. Since the corresponding dates for this section range from 734 through 739, that means this section records poems that were also composed during the smallpox epidemic that ravaged the archipelago between 735 and 737. The disease reached even the highest ranks of nobility, and the heads of all four major Fujiwara branches (Muchimaro, Fusasaki, Umakai, and Maro) died by the end of 737 as a result.[311] This provides a possible explanation for the absence of poetry

[309] MYS VI, Poems 1009 and 1010.

[310] These events correspond to Poems 1024 through 1027, Poems 1013 through 1015, and Poem 1016 respectively.

[311] See the entries for the Fourth through Seventh Months of Tenpyō 9, SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 320–25.

from their faction recorded in this part of Volume VI: the brothers were simply not alive to host such events.

Even with such a simple and reasonable explanation, there is a glaring lack of poetry elsewhere in Volume VI written by either the four Fujiwara brothers or their associates. The only example of poetry from an event commemorating any of the four Fujiwara brothers is the inclusion of poetry from a banquet hosted by the sovereign in Tenpyō 4 in honor of Fujiwara no Umakai's assignment as military governor of the Saikaidō.[312] Such an absence in representing poetry from their groups suggests that the compiler(s) might have decided to deliberately exclude them from the volume's narrative. Instead, Tachibana no Moroe and other imperial princes along with their allies are given space within Volume VI to both speak for the realm and demonstrate their poetic prowess as a group.

Within this section the Ōtomo presence is minimal, save for the inclusion of two *tanka* poems written by Sakanoue on separate occasions. Unlike her entries in the previous section of Volume VI, Poems 1017 and 1028 both contain dates in their headnotes, contextualizing her poetry within the flow of time once more. The headnote for the first poem states that it was written during summertime in the 4th month of Tenpyō 9:

> 夏四月大伴坂上郎女奉拜賀茂神社之時便超相坂山望見近江海而晩頭還来作歌一首
> *Summer, fourth month: when Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue offered prayers at Kamo Shrine, she then passed over Mount Ōsaka, looked out at the sea of Ōmi, returned home at dusk and composed this poem.*

木綿(ゆふ)疊(たたみ)　手向(たむけ)乃(の)山(やま)乎(を)	The mountain peak of mulberry cloth offerings—
今日越(けふこえ)而(て)　何(いづれの)野邊尓(のへに)	Crossing it today, in which field shall I
廬(いほり)将為(せむ)吾等(われ)	Set up my lodgings and stay?[313]

[312] MYS VI, Poems 971 through 974. For translations, see Cranston (1993), 326–28, and 398–400.

[313] MYS VI, Poem 1017.

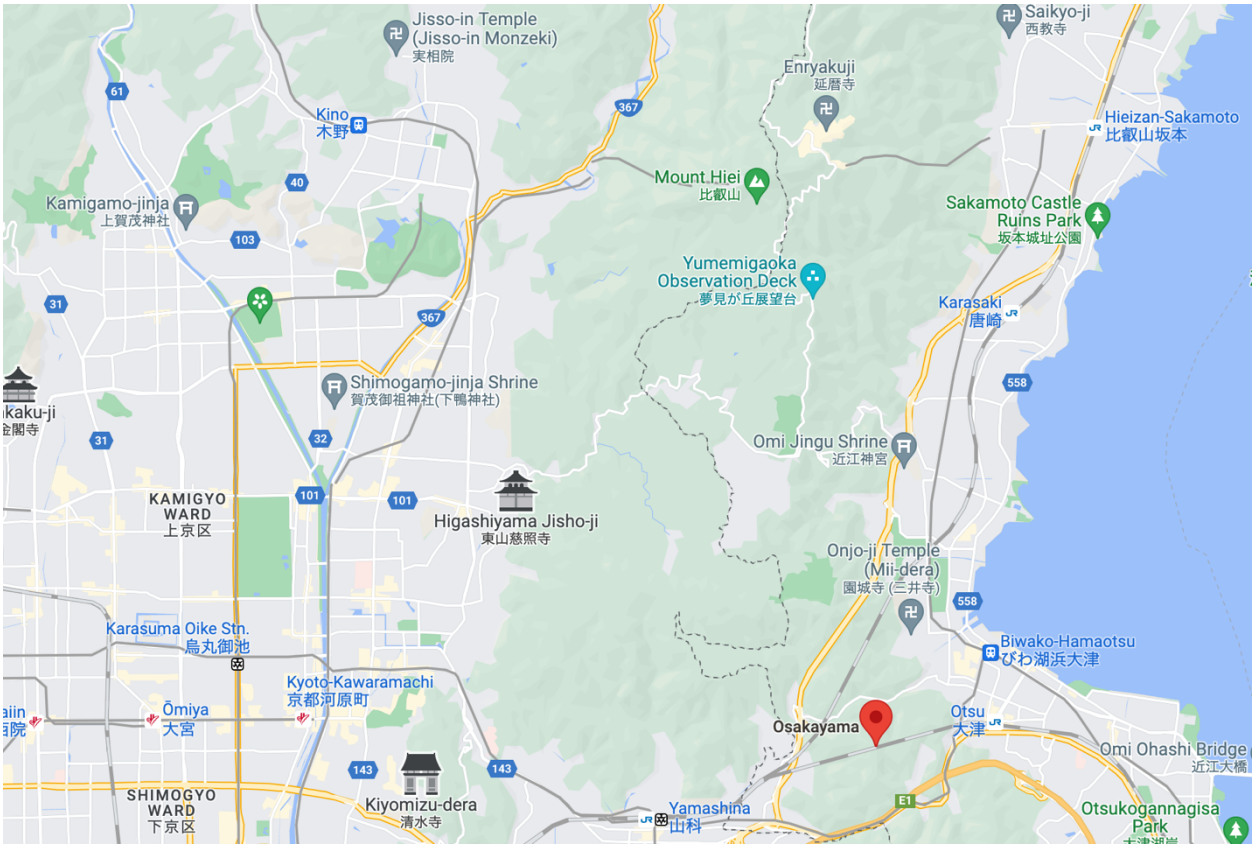

Figure 1. Map of west Kyōto featuring Kamigamo and Shimogamo shrine, Mount Ōsaka, and Lake Biwa

Compared with other poems to attributed to Sakanoue, Poem 1017's headnote contains a significant amount of detail contextualizing the poem it precedes. It depicts Sakanoue as going on a long journey up north to the Kamo Shrine in order to pay homage before climbing Mount Ōsaka to the south of modern-day Kyōto in order to gaze at Lake Biwa before "retuning home" late into the evening. The poem reads as if it was composed while Sakanoue is crossing the mountain itself. Poem 1017 also ends with the narrator wondering where she will stay for the night, as if there is an expectation that she will not complete her journey until the next day.

This contradiction between the description provided in the headnote and the persona depicted in Poem 1017 is just one of many inconsistencies and mysteries with which scholars

have grappled in their interpretations. If the purpose of Sakanoue's trip was to offer prayers at the Kamo shrine, why is the poem solely about Mount Ōsaka? Also, how feasible would it have been to travel to all those sites in one day as suggested by the headnote? The map above, an image captured from Google Maps, shows the three locations of both Kamo Shrines toward the lower left corner,[314] Mount Ōsaka as the red pin, and Ōmi Sea (Lake Biwa) on the right edge of the map. The distance from the upper shrine down to the mountain is already considerably far. If Sakanoue traveled back to her home residence in Heijō-kyō, it would make for a very arduous journey.[315]

For this reason, scholars debate about which parts of Sakanoue's journey actually occurred and which might have been added later as a product of literary imagination or editorial intervention. Aso Mizue claims that Poem 1017 is an example of "artistic intentionality" 文芸志向 (*bungei shikō*) where Sakanoue decides to compose a poem describing the hardships of travel.[316] In this interpretation, Sakanoue depicts herself as traveling out further from Kamo Shrine to Mount Ōsaka, but in reality, composed the poem during a banquet. Aso speculates that she might not have even journeyed out to Kamo Shrine in the first place. Onodera Seiko also expresses doubt over whether Sakanoue's pilgrimage to the Kamo Shrine was for the purpose of public worship, as it is peculiar to see women offer up prayers in such a public capacity unless it is an imperial princess visiting Ise Shrine.[317]

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[314] Scholars theorize that Sakanoue likely visited the upper shrine 上賀茂神社 to the north.

[315] See Figure 1 on the previous page. Mount Ōsaka is indicated by the red pin.

[316] Aso Mizue. *Man'yōshū zenka kōgi san.* Tokyo: Kasama shoin, (2007).

[317] Onodera (1993), 173.

There is also a noticeable difference between the details of the headnote right before Poem 1017 and its description in the table of contents 目録 (*mokuroku*) at the beginning of the volume. While the headnote in the body of the text mentions that Sakanoue went to worship at the Kamo Shrine, its entry in the index only mentions Sakanoue climbing the mountain. According to Itō Haku, the deletion of a reference to the "Kamo Shrine" from Poem 1017's description allows for the headnote to align with the body of the poem, and also reveals the compiler's understanding of the poem.[318] This modified descriptor of Poem 1017 appears in the the *Genryaku-kōhon* 元暦校本 manuscript, the earliest existing version of Volume VI, dating from the early Kamakura period.[319] In other words, certain paratextual elements such as Poem 1017's entry in the index to Volume VI and its presentation in an early manuscript, along with the subject matter of the poem itself, provide evidence for most interpretations focusing on Mount Ōsaka.

There are also literary parallels that can be drawn between Poem 1017 and other poems in the *Man'yōshū*. Previous scholarship frequently mentions the possibility that Sakanoue's decision to travel to Mount Ōsaka and compose a poem about the location was inspired by Takechi no Kurohito's travel poems recorded in Volume III, in particular Poems 273 and 274.[320] Both poets write about the feelings of loneliness travelers experience, a common theme that repeats throughout other travel poems recorded in the *Man'yōshū*. Poem 1017 also shares similarities with Poem 3593 in Volume XV. Recorded as part of a sequence commemorating a

[318] Itō (1996), Vol. 3, 450.

[319] Inoguchi (2017), 242.

[320] For a translation, see Cranston (1993), 262.

mission to Silla between 736 and 737, the speaker in this poem also wonders about where to build shelter during their journey:

大伴能　美津尓布奈能里 許藝出而者　伊都礼乃思麻尓 伊保里世武和礼	After boarding the ship and rowing forth from the Fair Harbor of Ōtomo, on which island Will I build my makeshift shelter?[321]

As this mission to the continent involved another member of the Ōtomo lineage,[322] the connections between Sakanoue's Poem 1017 and Poem 3593 help to build an interconnected literary realm. Here noble subjects use specific imagery and expressions not only to convey their own individual feelings, but also as a means of participating in the larger realm of the court.

As Poem 1017's date corresponds with the years when a smallpox epidemic swept through the Japanese archipelago, previous scholarship has also debated whether this poem has any connections with the natural disaster. Yashiki Yorikatsu is the first scholar to propose that Sakanoue's poem is a prayer of safety for the Ōtomo lineage during the epidemic, and that might have been the reason she traveled to Kamo Shrine in the first place.[323] Onodera Seiko disagrees with this theory, pointing out that the epidemic had not reached the capital during the fourth month of 737 and that it would be odd for her to pray for her lineage's safety at a shrine belonging to another.[324] Using an entry from the *Shoku Nihongi* that records Fujiwara no Fusasaki's death by the disease in the fourth month as evidence, Noguchi Keiko counters

[321] MYS XV, Poem 3593. Translation from Horton (2012), 13. Text reformatted by me.

[322] Ōtomo no Minaka 大伴三中 (dates unknown). His exact relation to Tabito, Sakanoue, and Yakamochi is unknown. After the initial ambassador, Ahe no Tsugumaro 阿部継麻呂, died of disease in Tsushima during the return trip to the capital, Minaka became the leader yet was too sick to travel himself. See Horton (2012), 49, for an English language summary.

[323] Yashiki Yorikatsu. *Man'yōshū kōza*, Shun'yōdō 1933. Quoted in Onodera (1993).

[324] Onodera (1993), 173–80.

Onodera's argument and states that it is plausible for the epidemic to have reached the capital by this point in time.[325] Nevertheless, the subject of Poem 1017 is not so much about the reasons for Sakanoue making the trip to Kamo Shrine as it is about her experiencing feelings of loneliness during the trip.

Beyond speculation about Sakanoue's reasons for embarking on a journey to Kamo Shrine, there is no reference to the smallpox epidemic in the text of Volume VI. The year of Tenpyō 7 (735) is skipped entirely, and entries dated from Tenpyō 8 (736) and 9 (737) cover Prince Katsuragi's adopting the name, "Tachibana" and becoming a state subject along with a number of banquets hosted by princes and nobles. It seems prudent to situate Sakanoue's Poem 1017 alongside these poems and ask why it was included among them, especially when there is no other entry by a woman. The answer perhaps lies in the headnote right before the poem, in which additional information is provided about Sakanoue visiting Kamo Shrine to offer prayers. Regardless of the fact that the poem itself focuses on Sakanoue's personal feelings, offering up prayers 参拝 (*hōhai*) is an explicitly public act, as pointed out by Noguchi.[326] Therefore, Poem 1017's headnote indicates that the reader should consider Sakanoue in the space of this poem as if she were carrying out an official act, even though she held no official position in court. It contains similar language and imagery to a headnote for an earlier entry in the volume featuring Tabito, commemorating the time when he and other members of the Dazaifu went to worship at Kashii Shrine in 728:

冬十一月大宰官人等奉拜香椎廟訖退歸之時馬駐于香椎浦各述懐作歌

[325] Noguchi (1997), 11.

[326] Ibid.

Winter, eleventh month: when the Dazai ministers finished offering prayers at Kashii Mausoleum and returned home, they stopped their horses along Kashii Bay and each made poems speaking their thoughts.[327]

Just as Tabito and his men take a moment to express emotions felt during their journey, Sakanoue too is depicted as taking the opportunity to honor the occasion with a poem of her own. The parallels between Sakanoue and Tabito's portrayals situates them in similar positions as subjects of the realm and Sakanoue as interim representative of the Ōtomo lineage on a literary and social level. She travels in service of her duties as subject and also is given space in the volume to record her experience and literary output from the event. It is near impossible to ascertain the reasons for the journey, and there is doubt whether such a journey was feasible in a single day. The feasibility of such travel, I would argue, is not as important as the fact that Sakanoue is *portrayed* within the text to make the journey in the same manner as her brother. This distinguishes Sakanoue's image from that of other women both in Volume VI and in other volumes, as she becomes an avatar for the Ōtomo lineage and their literary legacy.

Sakanoue's last recorded poem in Volume VI involves a peculiar incident with a giant flying squirrel ムササビ (*musasabi*). Dated during an unspecified month in Tenpyō 11 (739), the animal flies into the palace while Shōmu is out hunting on the plains of Takamato. According to the headnote, someone in the palace catches it with the hopes of presenting it to the sovereign:

十一年己卯　天皇遊獦高圓野之時小獣泄走都里之中　於是適値勇士生而見獲即以此獣獻上御在所副歌一首　獣名俗曰牟射佐妣
Eleventh year, Earth Rabbit: *when the Sovereign went out hunting in the fields of Takamato, a small creature escaped into the capital residence. Thereupon, a brave man caught it alive and presented it to the Sovereign. A poem accompanied it.*
The animal's name is commonly said to be a flying squirrel.

ますらを の　たかまとやま に
大夫之　高圓山尓　　Since the brave men had been chasing down game on

[327] Headnote to MYS VI, Poems 957 through 959.

迫有者（せめたれば）　里尓（さとに）下来（おりける）流　　Mount Takamato, it came down into the palace,
牟射佐毗曽此（むざさびそこれ）　　This flying squirrel right here.

右一首大伴坂上郎女作之　但未逕奏而小獣死斃　因此獻歌停之
As for the poem [above], Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue made it. However, when it had not yet been presented [to the Sovereign], the small animal died a violent death. Due to this, [they] halted in offering this poem.[328]

While the content of the poem itself is not very interesting, the headnote and endnote are both surprisingly detailed, which suggests that it came from within the Ōtomo household, most likely from Yakamochi. Another peculiar aspect of the paratext is that authorship is attributed to Sakanoue only in the endnote following the poem. Besides Poems 4220 and 4221 (her last recorded entries in the entire *Man'yōshū*) in Volume XIX, Poem 1028 is the only example where Sakanoue's name is not given in the headnote before the poem. In addition, the paratext's format resembles that of Volumes XIX and Volume XX, with each author's name appearing in the endnote instead of the headnote. As these volumes are a part of the collection to which scholars refer as Yakamochi's "poetic journal" 歌日誌 or "poetic diary" 歌日記 and the format of Poem 1028 uses a similar pattern, it is safe to theorize that this poem directly came from Yakamochi.

The next question to address is why such a poem was included in the anthology, given its lack of creativity along with the fact that the gift was aborted in the end. Perhaps one reason is because of who was involved in the events surrounding the poem. By the time this poem was composed, Yakamochi was already employed in the palace as an *udoneri*.[329] For this reason, Itō

[328] MYS VI, Poem 1028.

[329] This is based off other paratextual information found in Volume VIII of the MYS. In a sequence of poems collected from a winter banquet hosted by Tachibana no Naramaro, Poem 1591's endnote designates authorship to "*udoneri* Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi." 右一首内舎人大伴宿祢家持 The endnote to Poem 1580 in a sequence before Naramaro's banquet dates the year as Tenpyō 10 (738). 天平十年戊寅の秋八月二十日 As Volume VIII is arranged chronologically for the most part, scholars presume that Yakamochi began his political career by 738.

Haku speculates that he likely accompanied Shōmu during the hunt on the Takamato plains.[330] Given Takamato's importance to Shōmu both as the location of his detached palace and as a place where he loved to visit,[331] Poem 1028 and its headnote bring the Ōtomo lineage in close proximity to the sovereign. Sakanoue's knowledge both about the imperial hunt as well as the what occurred in the palace indicates a particular kind of intimacy to the palace. There is also the possibility that the "brave man" 勇士 described in the headnote as catching the flying squirrel is Yakamochi himself, as it would explain why Sakanoue could write about the episode. That would mean that Poem 1028's significance is not about the poem itself, but what it represents in terms of the Ōtomo lineage's relationship with the imperial throne. Their attempts at honoring Shōmu during the moment with both a pet gift and a song praising him and his men as they hunt are thrwarted. Through Sakanoue's authorship and Yakamochi's editorial control, however, the Ōtomo lineage and their devotion to the imperial throne is still memorialized with the pages of the *Man'yōshū*.

Conclusion: Rewriting History through the Anthology

After Sakanoue's Poem 1028 that accompanies a captured flying squirrel, Yakamochi takes over as representative of the Ōtomo lineage for the rest of Volume VI. His entries include poems composed during a procession to Ise during Fujiwara no Hirotsugu's rebellion in 740, the relocation of the capital to Kuni during the same year, and poems from banquets and drinking

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Yakamochi's name does not appear in the *Shoku Nihongi* until an entry for the first month in Tenpyō 17 (745), where he is conferred Junior Fifth Rank, Lower. For more, see SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 3, 4-5.

[330] Itō 3 (1996), 469–70.

[331] Ibid. Also, see Poems 4315–20 and 4506–10 in Volume XX for poems by Yakamochi and his cohorts reminiscing about the Takamato plains.

parties attended by Prince Asaka, the preferred imperial successor of Tachibana no Moroe's faction. When the prince mysteriously dies in 744, this event is marked by the disappearance of Volume VI's organizational framework based on imperial chronology. The fact that no members of the Fujiwara lineage appear again outside of Yatsuka, and there is no poem commemorating Princess Abe's enthronement as Crown Princess, makes it clear that not only is Volume VI a book dedicated to Emperor Shōmu's reign, but it is also dedicated to a particular *vision* of who mattered (or should have mattered) among the members of his court during his time on the throne.

As an important figure within this version of history, Sakanoue functions in Volume VI as the intermediary between Tabito's death and Yakamochi's coming-of age, carrying on the Ōtomo legacy through her poetry which demonstrates dedication to the sovereign. While it is possible to also interpret her image as such in Volumes III and IV, Volume VI presents the most "historical" version of Sakanoue through descriptions of her journeys in the headnotes and endnotes complete with dates. Even the non-chronological "Sakanoue's Section" inserted into the middle of the volume serves a purpose within the larger narrative about the court during the Tenpyō period. By ignoring court chronology and focusing on the poetic activities of Sakanoue and her associates, Volume VI does not have to acknowledge the height of Fujiwara dominance in the early 730s following Prince Nagaya's execution in 729. Sakanoue's poems in this section thus act as a means of diverting attention away from the court in order to focus on her personal relationship with Yakamochi.

Within the text, Sakanoue's poems dwindle in number once Tachibana no Moroe rises to power following the deaths of the Fujiwara brothers in 737, but they are still recorded as entries dedicated to events happening at the palace. She possesses a literary protagonism throughout

Volume VI that is similar to her male counterparts. This situates her within or adjacent to the public sphere yet sets her apart on account of her gender. Sakanoue's unique position in this book, due in part to her proximity to Yakamochi, reveals the full extent of a compiler's power to impact their audience's understanding of an anthology, its poets, and the world in which they lived even several generations after their own lifetime.

Conclusion

A Testament to Sakanoue and the Ōtomo Lineage

In the year 746, two years after the sudden death of Prince Asaka, Yakamochi was assigned to Etchū Province 越中国 as the provincial governor.[332] As he left the capital for his new appointment, his aunt Sakanoue apparently sent him two poems, and another two still after he arrived at his destination:

> 大伴宿祢家持以天平十八年閏七月被任越中國守　即取七月赴任所於時姑大伴氏坂上郎女贈家持歌二首
> *In the Intercalary Seventh Month of Tenpyō 18, month*[333] *Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi was appointed Governor of Etchū Province. He then took the seventh month to move to the place of his new appointment. At that time, his mother-in-law, Lady Sakanoue of the Ōtomo lineage, sent Yakamochi two poems.*
>
> 久佐麻久良　多妣由久吉美乎　　To pray for my lord's safety as he goes out on
> 佐伎久安礼等　伊波比倍須恵都　　A journey with grass for his pillow, I bury
> 安我登許能敝尓　　Jars of sake by my bed.
>
> 伊麻能其等　古非之久伎美我　　If I think of my lord with the kind of longing
> 於毛保要婆　伊可尓加母世牟　　That I feel now, what indeed shall I do then?
> 須流須邊乃奈左　　There is nothing to be done.
>
> 更贈越中國歌二首
> *She sent an additional two poems to Etchū Province*
>
> 多妣尓伊仁思　吉美志毛都藝氐　　My lord who went out on his journey appears in
> 伊米尓美由　安我加多孤悲乃　　My dreams all the time. Is it because my one-sided
> 思氣家礼婆可聞　　Longing is indeed overgrown?

[332] Etchū Province is located in the modern-day prefecture of Toyama. 富山県

[333] According to Omodaka Hisataka and Itō Haku's commentaries, the character 閏 (*urū,* "intercalation") is a mistake in the transcription, and the character should be 秋 (*aki,* "Autumn").

美知乃奈加　久尓都美可未波　Gods who rule over the distant land of Etchū,[334]
多妣由伎母　之思良奴伎美乎　Please show your mercy unto my lord as he is
米具美多麻波奈　Unfamiliar with travel. [335]

Over the span of four poems, Sakanoue adopts the position of a woman offering prayers for a loved one as he goes off on a journey to the hinterlands, far from both her and the capital. This will be Sakanoue's image for Volumes XVII, XVIII, and XIX, the first three books of the final section of the *Man'yōshū* known colloquially as Yakamochi's "poetic diary," 歌日記 or as Tetsuno Masahiro calls it, "poetic journal" 歌日誌.[336]

Poems 3927 through 3930 encompass many of the personas seen throughout the course of this study. Sakanoue buries jars of alcohol in the ground just as she does in the God-Worshiping Song, finds no recourse for resolving her longing as in the Song of Resentment, is plagued by visions of her son-in-law in her dreams as she is with her daughter while at the Tomi Residence in Poem 724, and uses a traditional pose found in *Man'yō* poetry of imploring the gods of a local region for safe travel. These poems showcase not only the personas and voices found in many of Sakanoue's poems, but also in many poetic compositions by other poets in the anthology.

Yet as I have argued throughout this study, the personas and voices expressed in poems are framed and contextualized by paratextual elements such as headnotes and endnotes. Although some of the voices in the poetry above, especially Poem 3929, could be interpreted as a

[334] The phrase "michi no naka" 道の中 refers specifically to the "middle" of Koshi Province 越の道, which was divided into three regions: Echizen 越前, Etchū 越中, and Echigo 越後.

[335] MYS XVII, Poems 3927 through 3930.

[336] See Tetsuno, Masahiro, *Ōtomo no Yakamochi "uta nisshi" ronkō*. Tōkyō: Hanawa shobō (2007), for his study on the last four volumes of the *Man'yōshū*.

woman expressing unrequited love, the headnotes guide our reading of the poem to instead understand it as the expression of an aunt who is missing her nephew, wondering whether he misses her too, and is anxious to hear that he has made it safely to his destination.

One can of course argue that Poems 3927 through 3930 demonstrate once again Sakanoue and the Ōtomo lineage's propensity for using amorous language in composing poetry. I would argue it is more accurate to say that, as Paul Rouzer proposes in the case of classical Sinitic poetry, this reliance on a "language of longing" suggests that vernacular Japanese poetic expressions of desire in the mid-eighth century were subsumed under a heteronormative model based on marriage and courtship rituals.[337] While this also suggests that certain groups, in particular women, most often wrote in voices belonging to the *sōmon* poetic category due to the limited social contexts in which they could compose poetry, it is clear that this poetic voice of yearning could be used to express more than just erotic desire, as it in fact does throughout many of Sakanoue's contributions that I have discussed in this study.

Moreover, as I have argued in this dissertation, when an author's poems are read within the larger anthological narratives constructed by headnotes, endnotes, and sequencing of poems, they become characters in those stories. Although previous studies often examined paratextual materials in order to construct a personal biography for Sakanoue, they rarely ever considered how her position fits into the *Man'yōshū*'s larger political narratives surrounding the Ōtomo lineage's position at court. One of this study's major goals has been to demonstrate Sakanoue's importance to that narrative as presented in the anthology.

In the first chapter I addressed the problem of regarding *sōmon* poetry as apolitical and Sakanoue as a figure who operated exclusively in the realm of private romantic affairs. Drawing

[337] Rouzer (2001), 28.

upon Shinada Yoshikazu's recent study on the allusions to historical events in Volume IV together with Gérard Genette's conception of *paratext*, I demonstrated how elements such as headnotes, endnotes, and sequencing create a version of Sakanoue that functions as an axis in that book around which her family relatives and other high-ranking members of the court rotate, writing relationships that both involve her and are outside her. As the volume progresses, these paratextual items change our perception of Sakanoue from a young romantic heroine to a concerned mother and matriarchal figure that culminates in the successful marriage between the Elder Daughter and Yakamochi and the maintenance of the Ōtomo lineage's ties to the sovereign in the wake of the Prince Nagaya Incident and Tabito's death.

Chapter Two turned from *sōmon* poetry toward the categories of *zōka* and *banka* and began with a discussion of women's disappearance from these categories in Volume III and VI as compared to Volumes I and II, suggesting that women were also restricted from participating in public events where poetic practice occurred, such as imperial processions, hunts, and state-sanctioned banquets. Sakanoue is the lone exception to this rule, as she has at least one contribution recorded in each of the three categories represented in Volume III (*zōka*, *hiyuka*, *banka*). This was likely due to her proximity to the presumed final compiler of Volume III, Yakamochi. Scholars have noted that each section ends with contributions roughly recorded between 730 and 744 from Tabito, Sakanoue, Yakamochi, or their associates.[338] This suggests that someone such as Yakamochi added these poems after 744, possibly with the help of Sakanoue herself. With the addition of these poems, Volume III establishes a pattern, which repeats in other Ōtomo-centric books besides Volume V, of representing contributions by Tabito, Sakanoue, then Yakamochi in that exact order. Similar to the contributions from her brother and

[338] In the case of the *hiyuka* section, it is primarily a showcase of poems by the Ōtomo literary circle.

nephew, the God-Worshiping Song and the Rigan Elegy by Sakanoue not only establish her as a leader within the Ōtomo lineage, but also as someone adept in the poetic practices established by figures such as Hitomaro a generation earlier. The *hiyuka* section, which focuses on the marriage of Sakanoue's daughters to Yakamochi and Surugamaro, further emphasizes her importance within the Ōtomo family structures as it portrays her as the concerned mother at its center safeguarding her desirable daughters.

The third chapter focuses on the most "historical" version of Sakanoue seen in the anthology. As an author represented in Volume VI, a book dedicated to poetic compositions commemorating the beginning of Emperor Shōmu's reign up until Prince Asaka's death in 744, Sakanoue is positioned within a public or semi-public space. She travels the realm and participates in family drinking parties. In the paratexts surrounding some of her travel poems, she is also depicted in a similar manner to traveling male courtiers and adopts a similar poetic voice of longing. Furthermore, I argue that her figure and works in the middle of the volume, located in a section defined by its non-chronological framework, are used to divert attention away from a Fujiwara-dominated court and put focus on Sakanoue and Yakamochi's relationship. This is in keeping with Volume VI's general ideological framework, which is not a mere textual commemoration of Emperor Shōmu's time on the throne. Rather, Volume VI presents a specific version of the court defined not by the Fujiwara and Princess Abe, who would eventually accede to the throne, but by Ōtomo ally Tachibana no Moroe and Prince Asaka, their faction's preferred successor. Sakanoue's poems in the middle of Volume VI bookend the rise of Tachibana no Moroe's faction. The placement of these poems along with the non-chronological "Sakanoue's Section" situate her within a narrative about the rise of the Tachibana faction in the 730s.

While I have gestured toward Yakamochi's impact on Sakanoue's depiction within the *Man'yōshū*, a key question that remains to be addressed is the role of Yakamochi as editor and compiler in framing the narrative surrounding the rest of his family and the Ōtomo lineage, including his father Tabito and his wife, the Elder Daughter of Sakanoue. As there has not been an English-language monograph published on the Ōtomo since Paula Doe's *A Warbler's Song in the Dusk* in 1982, which functions primarily as a biography on Yakamochi, it is clear that there is a considerable hole in Anglophone scholarship on this subject, especially since Yakamochi and Sakanoue are two of the most represented poets in the *Man'yōshū*. Since they also most often invoke the terms of eighth-century idealized femininity and masculinity respectively within their poetry, examining their works together would provide us a glimpse into social relationships between the two genders as well as gender role expectations among the eighth-century Japanese aristocracy.

Finally, another avenue for further research is what I would term the "afterlife" of authors such as Sakanoue, Yakamochi, and Tabito. As has been pointed out by scholars such as Omodaka Hisataka, Itō Haku, and Mack Horton and Torquil Duthie in English, the *Man'yōshū* is not only a history of the court in early Japan, but also contains a narrative about the Ōtomo lineage's circumstances within that history. One result of that narrative, thanks to the editing hand of Yakamochi, is that the authors associated with this lineage have come to be regarded as some of the most representative poets for the *Man'yōshū* and literary production in early Japan. Yet the works of Sakanoue and Tabito have not received the same levels of treatment in early modern and modern Japanese commentaries, nor are they covered to the same degree in English-language overviews on Japanese literature. The commentarial tradition—particularly as it developed from the Edo period onward— is of course another form of paratext that has

influenced our current understanding of the Ōtomo lineage. One feature of this tradition seems to be the minimization of women poets such as Sakanoue in discourses on the *Man'yōshū* and premodern Japanese literature, despite their prominent presence in the original text.

Another major feature is the enshrinement of Ōtomo men such as Tabito and Yakamochi as paragons of loyalty and devotion. Given that the Ōtomo were an old military family whose ancestry traces back to a vassal of Ninigi-no-mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊, grandson of the sun goddess Amaterasu 天照大神, that descended from heaven along with the divine prince in order to unify and rule the Japanese archipelago,[339] they have been described first and foremost as loyal to the imperial household in overviews of their works. We see this in the JSPS's introduction to an English-language anthology of *Man'yō* poems, where the Ōtomo are cited as an example of how the people, and the clans in particular, expressed devotion to the sovereign atop a new world order:

> The newly-awakened sense of loyalty in all its freshness and fullness may be perceived on almost every page of the *Man'yōshū*. It was a joyful devotion arising from the close relationship between sovereign as parent and subjects as children—a relationship based on the idea of a great family-state, which was then so forcibly projected upon the national consciousness. The clan system was not destroyed, but refined and elevated. **Each clan, rising above its selfish interests, re-discovered its *raison-d'etre* in light of its obligations to the Imperial House. The clansman realized his responsibility to uphold the reputation of its ancestors and strove to live and act accordingly, as may be readily seen from the works of the poets of the Ōtomo clan**.[340]

Here the JSPS envisions the *ritsuryō* period in the eighth century as a time of peace, with its hierarchy firmly established and the "clans" (which I have referred to as "lineages" instead) recognizing their role as subservient to the sovereign. As we have seen throughout this study, the

[339] Doe, Paula. *A Warbler's Song in the Dusk: The Life and Work of Ōtomo Yakamochi (718 - 785)* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), 4. For an English translation of the passage, see Philippi, Donald, *Kojiki* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 141.

[340] JSPS (1940), xxxiv–xxxv. Bolded text added by me.

reality of court life in early Japan was filled with political infighting and intrigue as different factions consisting of both princes and aristocrats jockeyed for their preferred heirs to inherit the imperial throne. The Ōtomo were not exempt from this. In fact, a number of them were accused of, and punished for, conspiracies against the throne and other noble lineages during the course of the eighth century, including Yakamochi.[341]

Nevertheless, the image of the Ōtomo as faithful imperial subjects has persisted over the years, cropping up once more in the wake of the Japanese government's announcement of *Reiwa* as the new era name. In a speech former U.S. president Donald Trump gave during a banquet at the imperial palace in May 2019, he stated that, "Reiwa celebrates the unity and beauty of the Japanese nation," and that Tabito "[writes] of the potential and possibilities of spring."[342] As it is highly doubtful that the president had any idea of who Tabito was before giving his speech, someone affiliated with the imperial household or Japanese government must have written the transcript on his behalf. Regardless of its authorship, the speech is clearly designed to depict Tabito as an embodiment of harmony looking toward the future, in spite of the turbulent historical reality of the Prince Nagaya Incident that surrounded the Plum Blossom Banquet sequence's composition as pointed out by Shinada Yoshikazu.[343] If we read the text of the

[341] The largest rebellion involving the Ōtomo lineage was by far Tachibana no Naramaro's Rebellion 橘奈良麻呂の乱 in 757. While some members were merely exiled for their involvement, such as Koshibi 大伴古慈斐 (695 – 777), others such as Komaro 大伴古麻呂 (d. 757) died while imprisoned and tortured. After his passing in 785, Yakamochi himself was implicated in the assassination of fellow statesman Fujiwara no Tanetsugu 藤原種継, one of the sovereign's favored advisors, and posthumously stripped of rank. The *Shoku Nihongi* reflects this disgrace by using the character *shi* 死 to observe his passing instead of *kō* 薨, the character normally used to refer to the deaths of nobles. Yakamochi's son Naganushi 大伴永主 (dates unknown) was also stripped of rank and sent into exile, taking his father's ashes with him. Yakamochi would later be exonerated, his ashes returned to Nara and his rank reinstated in 806. For passages on Tachibana no Naramaro's Rebellion and Yakamochi's death, see SNKBT *Shoku Nihongi* 3, 195 – 211, and 5, 345–47.

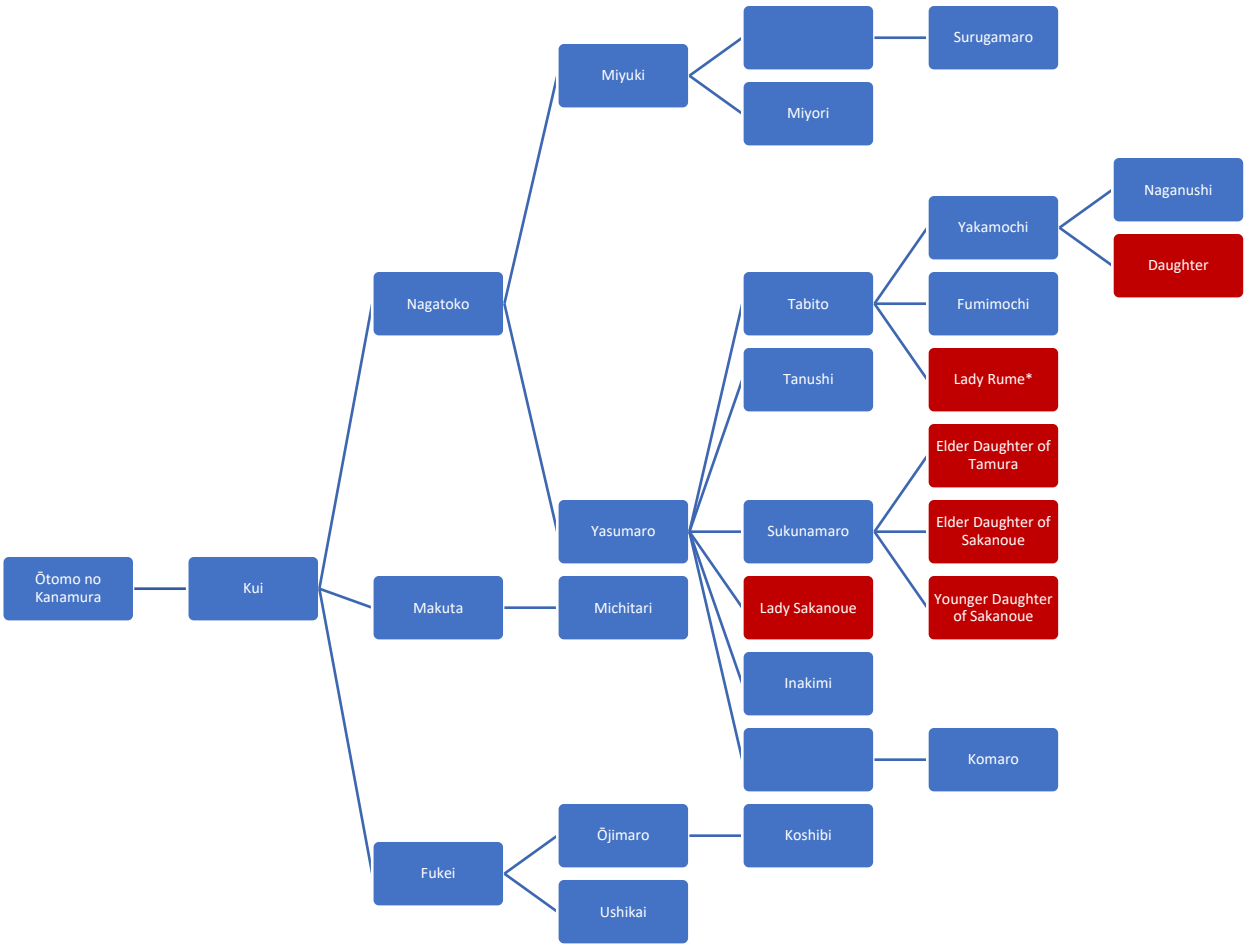
[342] "Remarks by President Trump at State Banquet" 27 May, 2019. https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-state-banquet/ Accessed 23rd May 2022.

[343] Shinada Yoshikazu (2019), 48–53. See introduction for a brief discussion of this article.

Volume V itself with an understanding of the conditions under which it was written, Tabito appears not as happy and hopeful, but as a disillusioned man turning away from the corrupt world of politics toward the realm of leisure and poetic practice.

While the germ of this idea that the Ōtomo were loyal subjects of the imperial throne stems from within the anthology itself, it was not based on a historical reality. Rather, it was an image created by the editor (Yakamochi) in order to envision a world in which the Ōtomo and their allies were central to the court's social networks. As I have argued in this study, because of her position as a high-ranking woman, the figure of Sakanoue was able to play a central role in this vision as a representative of the Ōtomo family and their poetic skills while avoiding any negative political associations. Yet ironically because of her gender, Sakanoue has been excluded or minimized in discourses on the *Man'yōshū* in the centuries since then. This study is but a first step toward rectifying that situation.

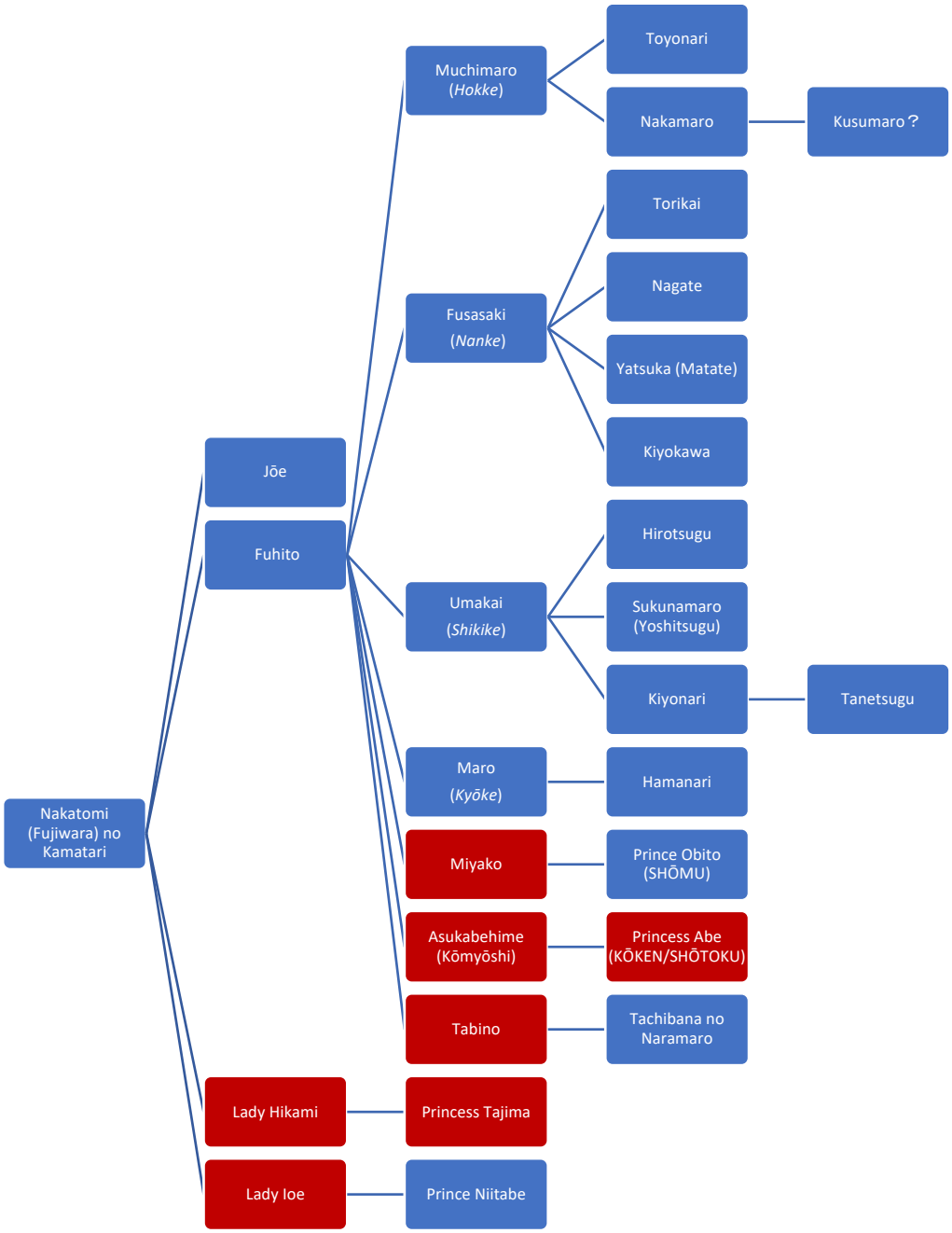
Appendix A: Ōtomo Lineage Tree



Notes

- Ōtomo lineage tree based on information found in Sakamoto Nobuyuki and Mōri Masamori, eds. *Man'yō koto hajime* (2016), and various endnotes in the *Man'yōshū*. Relatives such as Momoyo and Ikenushi are not included due to unknown parentage.
- Lady Sakanoue was first married to one of Emperor Tenmu's sons, Prince Hozumi. She then appeared to marry her half-brother, Sukunamaro, and gave birth to the Elder and Younger Daughters of Sakanoue. The Elder Daughter would eventually wed Yakamochi.
- Lady Rume appears in Volume XIX. The endnote to Poem 4194 identifies her as Yakamochi's younger sister. She seems to resides in the capital during Yakamochi's tenure in Etchū.

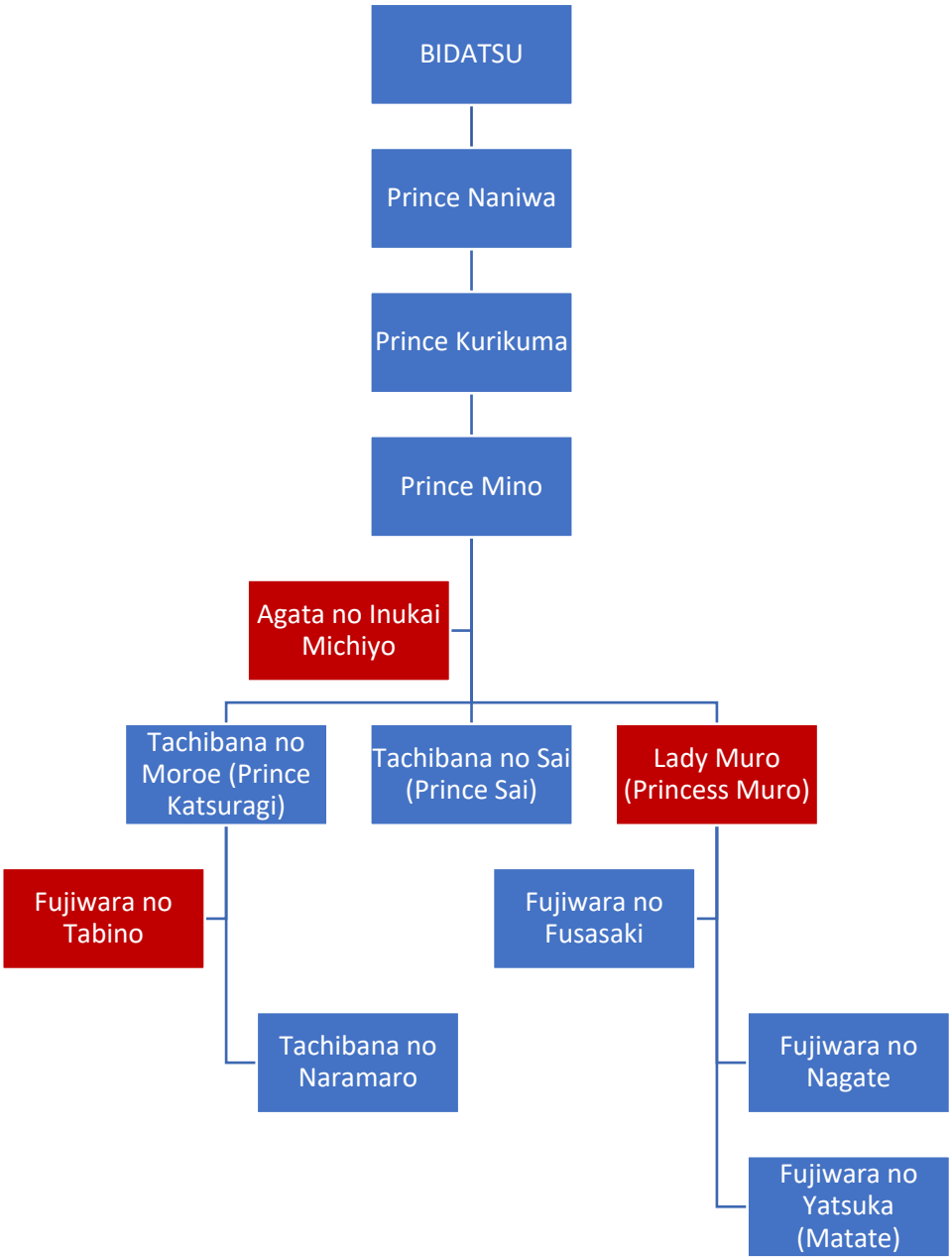
Appendix B: Fujiwara Lineage Tree



Notes

- Fujiwara lineage tree based on information found in Sakamoto and Mōri (2016) and Bauer Mikael, trans. *The History of the Fujiwara House: A Study and Annotated Translation of the* Tōshi Kaden. Kent, UK: Renaissance Books (2020), ix.
- Lady Hikami and Lady Ioe were two of Emperor Tenmu's wives. Lady Ioe later remarried her brother Fuhito and gave birth to Maro, the founder of the *Kyōke* Branch. Miyako married Emperor Monmu and gave birth to Prince Obito. He then married her sister Asukabehime and together had Princess Abe.

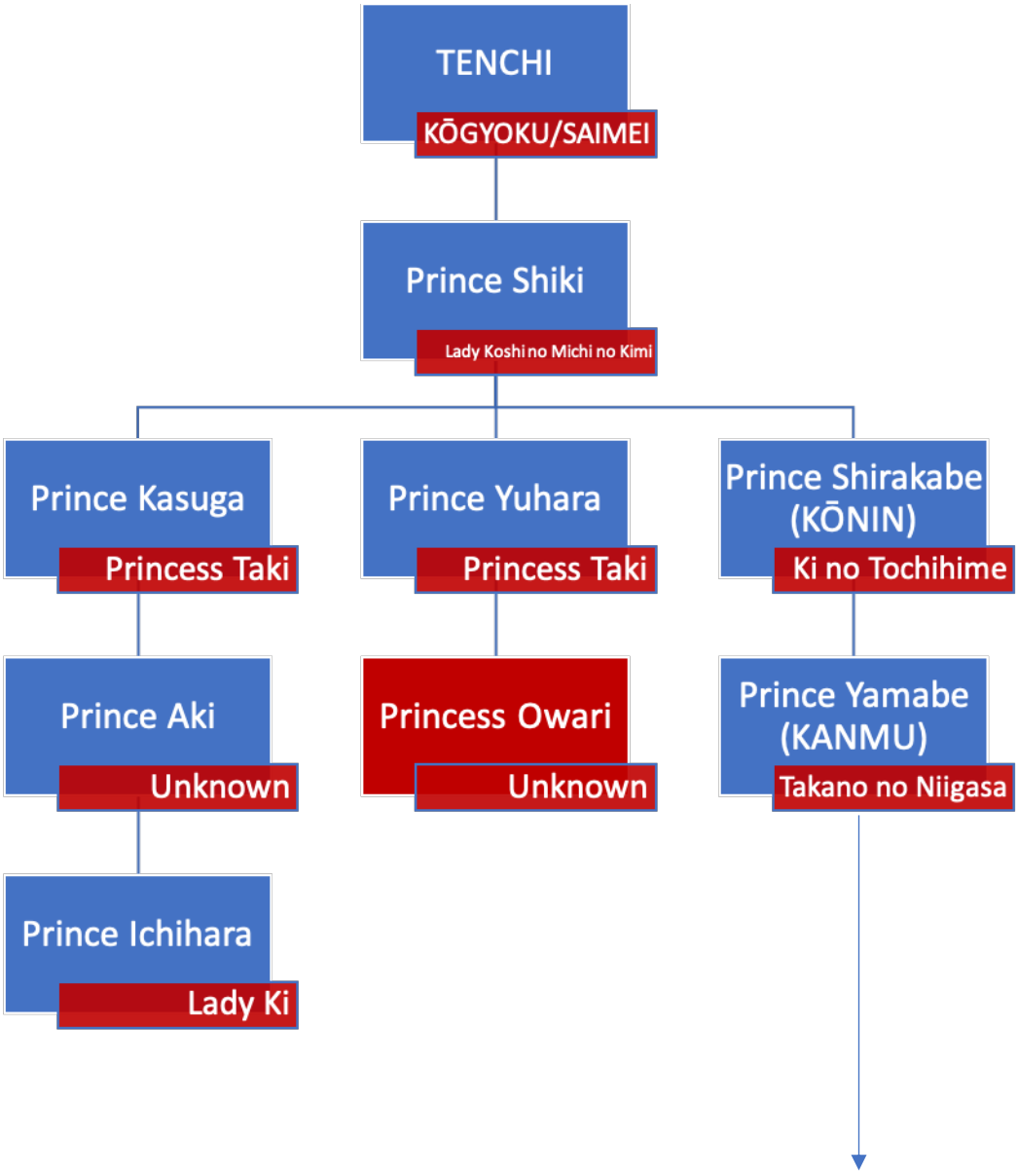
Appendix C: Tachibana Lineage Tree



Notes

- Agata no Inukai Michiyo was married to both Prince Mino and Fujiwara no Fuhito. With Prince Mino she gave birth Prince Katsuragi, Prince Sai, and Princess Muro. With Fuhito she gave birth to Asukabehime (Kōmyō) and possibly Tabino, who would later marry Tachibana no Moroe and give birth to Naramaro.
- Lady Muro married Fujiwara no Fusasaki and gave birth to Nagate and Yatsuka (later renamed Matate).

Appendix D: Prince Shiki's Family Tree



Appendix E: Additional Poems by Sakanoue

MYS IV, Poems 656 – 661

大伴坂上郎女歌六首
Six poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

吾耳曽　君尓者戀流　　It is only me who is longing for my lord.
吾背子之　戀云事波　　What my young man claims to be his yearning
言乃名具左曽　　Are simply words of comfort.

不念常　曰手師物乎　　Saying that I will yearn for that person no longer,
翼酢色之　變安寸　　How easily my heart is moved, like dye running
吾意可聞　　Off the *hanezu* flower.

雖念　知僧裳無跡　　Though I yearn for you, knowing there is no point in
知物乎　奈何幾許　　Doing such a thing, why do I continue to
吾戀渡　　Long for you so terribly?

豫　人事繁　　In recent times the whispers of others is thick.
如是有者　四恵也吾背子　　If this is the case, aaah, my young man,
奥裳何如荒海藻　　What of our future ahead?

汝乎与吾乎　人曽離奈流　　People are trying to pull you and me apart.
乞吾君　人之中言　　Come now, my lord, please do not listen to
聞起名湯目　　The slander of others!

戀々而　相有時谷　　Longing and longing, the time we can meet has come,
愛寸　事盡手四　　Even if it's only now, just speak freely those sweet words
長常念者　　If you think this is lasting.

MYS IV, Poems 672 – 674

安倍朝臣蟲麻呂歌一首
A poem by Ahe no asomi Mushimaro

倭文手纏　數二毛不有　　Having a life as crude and insignificant

壽持　奈何幾許　　As a hempen bracelet, why then do I long
吾戀 渡　　So terribly for you like this?

大伴坂上郎女歌二首
Two poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

真十鏡　磨師心乎　　If I gave my heart, polished and shining as if
縦者　後尓雖云　　It were a clear mirror, even if I regret it after,
驗 将在八方　　Would there be any point?

真玉付　彼此兼手　　Like a strand of jewels, you speak words, talking about
言歯五十戸常　相而後社　　Now and forever more, but after our meeting
悔二破有跡五十戸　　I am told you do have regrets.

MYS IV, Poems 683 – 689

大伴坂上郎女歌七首
Seven poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

謂言之　恐 國曽　　This is a land where the words people say are fearsome.
紅 之　色莫出曽　　Do not let it show on your face like a safflower's
念 死友　　Even if you die in longing.

今者吾波　将死与吾背　　As of now I am going to die, my young man!
生十方　吾二可縁跡　　Though I am alive, it does not mean you will
言跡云莫苦荷　　Say you will get close to me.

人事　繁哉君之　　Due to the abundance of others' gossip,
二鞘之　家乎隔而　　Shall we keep my lord longing in a separate home
戀乍将座　　Like swords in a double sheath?

比 者　千歳八徃裳　　These days it seems as if a thousand years has elapsed.
過 与　吾哉然念　　Why do I think that is so? Is it because of
欲 見鴨　　My desire to see you?

愛常　吾念情　　My heart in longing, which thinks of you so dearly,
速河之　雖塞々友　　Is a rushing river: even if it is blocked by dams,
猶哉将崩　　It will still tear them down.

青山乎　横殺[344]雲之　　Like a white cloud that crosses a lush green mountain
灼然　吾共咲為而　　Conspicuously you smile in my direction.
人二所知名　　Please, do not let others know!

海山毛　隔莫國　　When there are no mountains and seas separating us,
奈何鴨　目言乎谷裳　　How are times to meet and talk for even a little bit
幾許乏寸　　Like this so meager and few?

MYS VIII, 1432 – 1433

大伴坂上郎女柳歌二首
Two poems by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue on the willow

吾背兒我　見良牟佐保道乃　A willow that my young man might have seen along
青柳乎　手折而谷裳　　The roads of Saho – even if I just break off a twig,
見縁欲得　　By these means I want to see him.

打上　佐保能河原之　　Along the shores that run next to the Saho river
青柳者　今者春部登　　Are young willows, and when I take notice, I see
成尓鶏類鴨　　It has now become Spring.

MYS VIII, 1445

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

風交　雪者雖零　　Even though the snow mingles with the wind and falls,
實尓不成　吾宅之梅乎　　Do not scatter those plum blossoms of my abode

[344] The actual character for *kiru* here is a *gaiji* 外字 marked as the letter "g" or @050828. The commentary for Poem 688 in Satake Akihiro, et. al., SNKBT *Man'yōshū* 1, notes that the character for *kiru* is a variation of 殺. Based on this information, I have chosen to use 殺 here for now.

花尓令落莫 (はなにちらすな) Which do not bear any fruit.

MYS VIII, 1447

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

尋常 聞者苦寸 (よのつねに きけばくるしき) Usually it is unbearable to hear
喚子鳥 音奈都炊 (よぶこどり こゑなつかしき) The *yobukodori*,[345] but Spring has become a time
時庭成奴 (ときにはなりぬ) Where I long for its voice.

右一首天平四年三月一日佐保宅作
The one poem [above] was made at the Saho residence on the first day of the third month in Tenpyō 4.

MYS VIII, 1450

大伴宿祢坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

情具伎 物尓曽有鷄類 (こころぐき ものにそありける) What a painful and heartrending thing it is!
春霞 多奈引時尓 (はるかすみ たなびくときに) Love's overgrowth during the time of year
戀乃繁者 (こひのしげきは) When the spring mists are adrift.

MYS VIII, 1474

大伴坂上郎女思筑紫大城山歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue remembering Mount Ōki in Chikuzen

今毛可聞 大城乃山尓 (いまもかも おほきのやまに) Just about now, on the mountain of Ōki,
霍公鳥 鳴令響良武 (ほととぎす なきとよむらむ) The cuckoo's cries must be resonating,
吾無礼杼毛 (われなけれども) Even though I am not there.

[345] The exact bird to which the term *yobukodori* 呼子鳥 refers is unknown, hence I leave the term untranslated.

MYS VIII, 1475

大伴坂上郎女霍公鳥歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue on the cuckoo

何奇毛 (なにしかも) 幾許戀流 (ここだくこふる)
霍公鳥 (ほととぎす) 鳴音聞者 (なくこゑきけば)
戀許曽益礼 (こひこそまされ)

Why is it that I long terribly like this
For the cuckoo? When I hear its crying voice,
My longing grows even worse.

MYS VIII, 1484

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

霍公鳥 (ほととぎす) 痛莫鳴 (いたくなきそ)
獨居而 (ひとりゐて) 寐乃不所宿 (いのねらえぬに)
聞者苦毛 (きけばくるしも)

Oh, dear cuckoo, do not make such terrible cries!
Because when I am alone and cannot slumber,
If I hear you, it is painful still.

MYS VIII, 1498

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

無暇 (いとまなみ) 不来之君尓 (こざりしきみに)
霍公鳥 (ほととぎす) 吾如此戀常 (あれかくこふと)
徃而告社 (ゆきてつげこそ)

To my lord who has no time to spare and therefore
Does not come, go and relay to him, cuckoo,
Of how I long for him so.

MYS VIII, 1500

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

夏野之 (なつののの) 繁見丹開有 (しげみにさける)
姫由理乃 (ひめゆりの) 不所知戀者 (しらえぬこひは)
苦物曽 (くるしきものそ)

Like the star lily blooming red in the thickets
Of summer fields, a love that is not known
By others is a painful thing.

MYS VIII, 1502

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

五月之　花橘乎　　The orange blossoms that bloom in early summer—
為君　珠尓社貫　　I string them like beads along this rope for my lord.
零巻惜美　　Their falling is so pitiful.

MYS VIII, 1548

大伴坂上郎女晩芽子歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo nno Sakanoue on the late-blooming bush clover

咲花毛　乎曽呂波　　Flowers that have bloomed early are already enough.
奥手有　長意尓　　Of course, compared to a heart that has never changed,
尚不如家里　　They are not nearly as good.

MYS VIII, 1560 – 1561

大伴坂上郎女跡見田庄作歌二首
Two poems Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue made at the Tomi residence

妹目乎　始見之埼乃　　Autumn bush clover atop the coastal cliff of
秋芽子者　此月其呂波　　A darling's eyes first seen, for a while here, please
落許須莫湯目　　Do not scatter your petals.

吉名張乃　猪養山尓　　When I hear the cries of the crouching deer calling
伏鹿之　嬬呼音乎　　For their mates there on Mount Ikai in Yonabari,
聞之登門思佐　　I am filled with envy.

MYS VIII, 1592-1593

大伴坂上郎女竹田庄作歌二首
Two poems Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue made at the Taketa residence

しかとあらぬ　い ほしろを だ を
然不有　五百代小田乎　When one sits there in the small field huts, reaping
かりみだり　たぶせ にをれ ば
苅乱　田廬尓居者　And thrashing fields hardly a hectare,
みやこ し おもほゆ
京師所念　The capital comes back to mind.

こもりく の　はつせのやま は
隠口乃　始瀬山者　The mountains of Hatsuse, land of seclusion,
いろづきぬ　しぐれ のあめ は
色付奴　鍾礼乃雨者　Have changed their colors. Rain from late autumn showers
ふりにけらしも
零尓家良思母　Must have fallen over there.

右天平十一年己卯秋九月作
The two poems [above] were made in the ninth month, of Tenpyō 11, Earth Rabbit Autumn.

MYS VIII, 1619 – 1620

大伴家持至姑坂上郎女竹田庄作歌一首
A poem Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi made when he arrived at his mother-in-law Lady Sakanoue's Taketa residence

たまほこ の　みち は とほけど
玉桙乃　道者雖遠　Even though the road made of bejeweled spears is far,
はしきやし　いも をあひみ に
愛哉師　妹乎相見尓　So that I may meet with my beloved sister,
いでてそあがこし
出而曽吾来之　I set out for here, and I came.

大伴坂上郎女和歌一首
A poem in response by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

あらたまの　つきたつまでに
荒玉之　月立左右二　Since he did not come even until the next moon rose,
きまさねば　いめにしみつつ
来不益者　夢西見乍　Rough as a fresh gem, while I was dreaming,
おもひそあがせし
思曽吾勢思　I always longed for him.

右二首天平十一年己卯秋八月作
The two poems [above] were made in the eighth month of Tenpyō 11, Earth Rabbit Autumn.

MYS VIII, 1651

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

あわゆき の　このころつぎ て
沫雪乃　比日續而　　If the light snowfall these days continues to fall
か くふらば　うめのはつはな
如此落者　梅始花　　In this manner, will the first plum blossoms
ちり か すぎなむ
散香過南　　Completely scatter away?

MYS VIII, 1654

大伴坂上郎女雪歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue on snow

まつかげ の　あさ ぢ が うへ の
松影乃　淺茅之上乃　　To make the white snow stay atop the blady grass
しらゆき を　け たず て おかむ
白雪乎　不令消将置　　In the shade of pines, and remain without melting,
こと は か も な き
言者可聞奈吉　　How there is no spell for this!

MYS VIII, 1656 – 1657

大伴坂上郎女歌一首
A poem by Lady Ōtomo no Sakanoue

さかづき に　うめのはなうかべ
酒坏尓　梅花浮　　After meeting and drinking together with friends,
おもふどち　のみ て のち は
念共　飲而後者　　Plum blossoms floating in our cups filled with *sake*,
ちりぬ と も よ し
落去登母与之　　Even if they fall, it matters not.

和歌一首
A poem in response

つかさ に も　ゆるしたまへり
官尓毛　縦賜有　　This was even allowed by the authorities.
こよひのみ　のまむさけ か も
今夜耳　将飲酒可毛　　Is this *sake* we will drink only for tonight?
ちり こ す な ゆ め
散許須奈由米　　Flowers, please never fall!

右酒者官禁制僻　京中閭里不得集宴　但親々一二飲樂聽許者　縁此和人作此發句焉
Concerning [the above], alcohol was banned on official orders, and one could not have a banquet within the capital. However, since it was said that it was permissible to enjoy drinking with one or two close relatives, the respondent made these two lines.

MYS XVIII, 4080 – 4084

三月十六日
3rd Month, 16th Day

姑大伴氏坂上郎女来贈越中守大伴宿祢家持歌二首
Two poems [his] mother-in-law, Lady Sakanoue of the Ōtomo lineage, sent to the Director of Etchū, Ōtomo no Yakamochi

都祢比等能　故布登伊敷欲利波　More than the longing felt by ordinary people,
安麻里尓弖　和礼波之奴倍久　Has my longing become so bad that it seems
奈里尓多良受也　I have begun to perish?

可多於毛比遠　宇万尓布都麻尓　If my one-sided love was completely carried on
於保世母天　故事へ尓夜良波　The back of a horse and sent to Koshibe,
比登加多波牟可母　Might his heart respond to me?

越中守大伴宿祢家持報歌并所心三首
Three poems by the Director of Etchū, Ōtomo no sukune Yakamochi, [two of which were] in response, together with [one] straight from the heart

安万射可流　比奈能夜都故尓　If a bumpkin from the provinces, far from Heaven,
安米比度之　可久古非須良波　Is yearned by the capital's heavenly beings
伊家流思留事安里　Like so, it is worth living.

都祢乃孤悲　伊麻太夜麻奴尓　If this ordinary longing has not yet stopped
美夜古欲里　宇麻尓古非許婆　And from the capital comes a horse with more still,
尓奈比安倍牟可母　Can I carry it on my back?

別所心一首
A separate poem straight from the heart

安可登吉尓　名能里奈久奈流　In the darkness of dawn, the cuckoo cries out
保登等藝須　伊夜米豆良之久　Calling his own name. Like him, my longing grows
於毛保由流香母　More and more sentimental.

右四日附使贈上京師
[The above] were entrusted with a messenger and sent up to the capital on the fourth day.

MYS XIX, 4220 – 4221

従京師来贈歌一首　并短歌
A poem that came from the capital with tanka

和多都民能　可味能美許等乃　Even though she is my child who I thought
美久之宜尓　多久波比於伎氐　Even more precious than a lustrous pearl
伊都久等布　多麻尓末佐里氐　Kept stored in a jeweled comb box owned by
於毛敝里之　安我故尓波安礼騰　His Highness, the lord god Watatsumi,
宇都世美乃　与能許等和利等　Thinking this the way of our cicada-shell world,
麻須良乎能　比伎能麻尓麻仁　As her brave husband took her along with him and
之奈謝可流　古之地乎左之氐　Set out on the road to Etchū off beyond the hills,
波布都多能　和可礼尓之欲理　Since the time of our parting like the crawling vine,
於吉都奈美　等乎牟麻欲妣伎　My daughter's eyebrows, which bend like the curving waves
於保夫祢能　由久良々々々耳　The shadow of her face, which slowly sways as if
於毛可宜尓　毛得奈民延都々　It were a great ship, though I constantly see them,
可久古非婆　意伊豆久安我未　If I long for it so, will this old body of mine
氣太志安倍牟可母　Indeed be able to stand it?

反歌一首
One Envoy

可久婆可里　古非之久志安良婆　If it is just like this that I am to long for you,
末蘇可我美　弥奴比等吉奈久　Like a precious mirror, there would be neither a day
安良麻之母能乎　Nor a time when I would not see you.

右二首大伴氏坂上郎女賜女子大嬢也
The two poems [above] were sent by Lady Sakanoue of the Ōtomo lineage to her child, the Elder Daughter.

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